

COMIC.

THE FIVE CENT

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## JIM JAMS:

OR.

JACK OF ALL TRADES,

By the Author of "Skinny, the Tin Peddler," "Corkey," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

"DOGONED if I wouldn't like to know what it is that

Now, be lively, and you git that water in sudden, and then go chuck suthin' to them chickens. Consarn you, where'd you expect to go to when you die?"

"Where there ain't no cuffin' howlers," muttered Jim, as he gave the pump handle a final savage yank—lifted the bucket from the spout and started for the back door where the old man stood.

As Jim put his foot up, the old man gave him a shove on the shoulder to hurry him up.

Jim dropped the bucket suddenly and slosh it came,

"Take that, you miserable heathen," and gave him a side-winder that, had it struck him, might have knocked both ears into one.

But Jim dodged the blow, and her bony hand and knuckles swung around with full force and struck the old man an awful welt in the mouth.

This made him open his mouth for an extra howl, and out dropped his set of false teeth, upon which Jim, in making an inward dive to get into the house, planked the weight of his boot-heel and smashed them into



Jim Jams turned a summersault, striking the fat man plumb in the stomach, and was out and off.

makes old folks so contrary. They're allers a furgittin' they was young once themselves when they're a cuffin' me. When they gits together they'll gabble and tell each other what high old times they had when they was little fellows. There ain't no more reason in old folks than their is into a deaf and dumb woodchuck. I ain't goin' to stand it."

"Here you, Jim, ain't you gein' to bring in that air pail of water? Er do you want another warmin'?"

"I'm comin', pop."

"I'll pep you ef I catch you at any more tricks."

water and all, upon the old man's toes, making him fairly dance with pain.

"You infernal young — Oh, Gee Whittaker, ouch!" roared the victim.

"What on earth is the matter now? It's that dratted Jim, I'll be bound," cried the shrill voice of a woman within.

"What'd you want to shove a fellow up again the door-jamb for then?"

The woman, with her hands covered with dough, came out and took in the situation at a glance.

"smithereens" in the midst of the water-soaked rag carpet.

"Blast the little wretch, he shan't stay around the house another day, but I'll make his bones rattle for this."

"Them teeth is gone?" said the woman, picking up the mashed set, "regular stone teeth—cost ten dollars. If you don't jest welt that abominable Jim I'll—I'll—"

"Shut up, old 'oman, and git the towel till I stop this here gum bleeding where your consarned knuckles struck them."

Jim meantime had dived through into the kitchen. The old lady had been making dumplings for dinner.

Some of the dough was flattened out to be wrapped around the apples, and she had already done up two or three pies ready for the oven.

On a shelf at the corner of the table, against the wall, Jim saw a pile of old bottle corks carefully laid there by the old lady for safe keeping.

In an instant an idea struck Jim.

"I'll give 'em a dumplin' they ain't a lookin' for."

"With a quick backward look to see if no one witnessed the operation he gathered a handful of the corks and rolled around them a covering of the dough, and placed this new style of dumpling beside the others.

"Let her bide that, an' then cork up. Here comes the old faker after me—I'll git till he's over his mad. My eye, but didn't he git a soakin'!"

Jim, with the agility of a cat with a broomstick after it, sprang out through the kitchen window and made for the barn, where half an hour afterwards he was found by the old man, hauled down neck and heels and got such a tremendous warming below his waistband that he accepted "standing room only" at the dinner table, upon which occasion those dumplings were to be served up.

"You'll want to go to the circus next week, will you? I'll give you all the circus you need at home, you ungrateful vagabond!" said the old man, as he gave Jim the wind up with the strap in the barn.

The old man was Jed Slathers, and the old woman referred to was his worthy wife, and considerably, at odd times, his better half.

Or, as he thought his worst half, when she gave him a tongue lashing.

Old Jed Slather had a garden truck patch, which he called a farm down towards Greenport on Long Island.

He had cross-eyes, a big cross dog of no particular breed, and a horse the crossest and ugliest of the lot.

His house was of the usual farm-yard pattern, with a woodpile in front of it, a hen coop, and a dilapidated cowhouse on one side, and the pump of the log species.

Despite his cross-eyes, old Jed wasn't always cross himself.

He had his times of being good-natured and good-hearted.

If he hadn't been, Jim would never have been an inmate of his house.

He was childless.

He had wanted a "chore" boy—one that he could train up, and if he turned out all right "why" said he, "I might give him a little suttlin' to begin the world."

So after weeks of consultation with his wife, he settled the question, and during one of his regular trips to the city to Washington Market, where he usually sold his "truck" went to the orphan asylum, and selected our hero.

"Jim," or "Little Jimmy" as he was familiarly called in the institution by one of the officials, to distinguish him from another Jimmy, who was tall and bony.

Jimmy was then seven years of age.

At the moment of dropping that pail of water on the old man's toes, he was a month or two over twelve, and just old enough and sharp enough not to be fooled with.

But as for mischief.

And tricks.

"That boy was born of a trick. I thought I was goin' to have a blessin' for my old age in him, but I'm scared I ain't," said the old man.

Threats and strappings and shutting up in dark closets, and sending him to bed supperless—making him chop brush wood, work in the gardens—nothing could tame him down. He was Jim, and Jim he would be always the same.

While with the old man he had learned to read, to write little, and what he didn't know and wanted to know he learned in double quick time.

Uneasy, restless, never at rest, as full of vagaries as an "egg is full of meat," and with a disposition to fight back if anybody tread on his corns, with an answer, and a sharp one at that, for everybody—our Jim stands before you.

Is it any wonder that among the boys of the neighborhood he had the nickname of "Jim Jams?" for his wild freaks and queer doings?

Jim for short, Jim Jams for long.

Now that our boys have a fine idea of Jim and of how he came to be with old Jed Slathers, we can go on with our record of his rackets, of the scrapes he got into and out of.

"Now, Jim," said old Jed, at the dinner table, "if you don't stop your tricks an' sober down, I'll lug you off to the Brooklyn poorhouse and leave you there—blamed if I don't."

"Couldn't be much poorer than this," said Jim.

"S-h-e-t up, you ungrateful," began the old woman.

"Old woman," interrupted Jed, pushing away his meat plate, "jest roll one of them dumplings over here and be quiet. Now, then, wat are you grinnin' at, Jim?"

"Nothin'," answered Jim, grinning more than ever as he thought of that cork dumpling he had rolled up an hour before.

Old Jed got the smoking hot dumpling upon his plate, accompanied by the regulation amount of sauce.

"I'll put yer agin the world for makin' apple dumplings," said the old man, as he lifted his knife and fork, ready to demolish the big, sweating ball of dough.

Jim wriggled as he stood at the table, eyeing the old man's movements.

"That air warmin' out in the barn kinder itches you, don't it?" said the old man, grimly, as he stuck his fork into the dumpling.

"Hello, old woman, this 'ere apple isn't half cooked. It's hard as Pharaoh's heart."

He jammed the fork in fiercely, but it glanced and struck the plate, tore open the dough covering, and the force of his action scattered the contents out over the clean white cloth.

"Jerusalem's tripe!" cried the old man, rising and glaring down at the sight, and then at his wife, "them's corks, you old fool!"

"W-h-a-t?"

She rose up and looked over into his plate, and her eyes opened as wide as saucers.

"Tain't what, nor apples—but corks!"

For a moment silence reigned.

"Corks!"

"Yes, corks; an' if you think, old 'ooman, that I'm a natural born—"

"Jed," she half screamed, "I never put them corks into that dough sure's—"

Jed heard no more, for at that instant his eye rested upon Jim.

The expression of Jim's face would have made anybody else than the old man roar with laughter.

The truth flashed upon the old man's mind.

Jim was the maker of that cork dumpling, and Jed dropping his knife and fork went for him.

Jim dodged behind the old man's chair and struck a bee line for the porch door.

He was within a step of it. Jed was making a desperate reach to grab him by the scruff of the neck.

As he did so the door was opened so suddenly and unexpectedly that the old man got the edge of it bang against his nose while at the same moment Jim made another dodge for freedom to escape through the opening, and plunged head first into the ponderous waistband of Neighbor Stuflit, who so little expected such a catapult reception that uttering a dismal, short-winded groan he sat down with a heavy squelch.

Here Jim put in an acrobatic touch which would have done credit to a circus tumbler.

He turned a summersault with such precision that while his heels just grazed the downfallen fat man's scalp and knocked his silk hat off, he struck the porch with a jolly bounce and was out and off from present danger of a larruping.

Old Jed and his wife, after recovering from their surprise, helped the four hundred pounds of fat neighbor to his feet, and sat him down on the strongest chair in the room.

"I'll bust that boy's life out of him," puffed the fat neighbor.

"Start him off!" said the old woman. "I've had enough of him. He's a satan's imp if there ever was one."

"The young wretch puttin' up a cork dumpling for me—the ungrateful. Why, neighbor, there ain't a day gits over my head that I don't wallup him, never less than three times, and it's oftener half a dozen, and it does no more good than if I'd strapped a stone wall. What on earth I'm to do with him I don't know."

The fat man laughed.

"Maybe you've wallop him so much that it's made him sorter desprite."

"I've shut him up, tied him to bed posts, put him down cellar and give him other sorts of soothin' syrups, but he gits wus and wus. I don't wonder the boys round here calls him Jim Janis. He acts as if he had 'em in the natural way."

"Jed," said the fat man, "I've bought you them circus tickets—two of 'em, of course you'll take Mrs. Slathers. It's a moral circus you know."

"Yes, Barnum's show is always moral."

"And there ain't no monkies into it."

"We'll go, eh, old 'ooman?"

"Yas, less' see—it's to-morrow isn't it?"

"Certain."

"That's your reglar market day. I kin ride in the truck cart jest as well taking out the buggy."

"I'll give that rascally Jim a hiding and leave him at home with that cork dumpling's to live on till we get back."

The circus was discussed by the fat man and Jed for nearly an hour, while Mrs. Jed was washing up and putting away the "dinner things."

Jim as soon as he left the porch, leisurely betook himself to his usual retreat, the barn. He hadn't been there many moments before it suddenly occurred to him that he hadn't had a bit of fun yet—for the day.

"Didn't he squelch?" and he roared and danced a war dance on the bare floor as he thought of the fat neighbor.

Just then he recollects that the old man had told him to spread out on the fence the big red horse-blanket to dry.

It had been left out, accidentally, in the rain the night before.

Thinking of that red blanket naturally reminded him that in the lot next to the old man's, and belonging to a neighbor, was a particularly wild and uncomfortable bull that had chased him more times than one,

"Oh, here is fun, an' if that air wild animal's about I guess I'll break up fatty's chin with the old man. I'll git licked anyhow, an' I might well be in for two as one."

He took the red blanket, crossed from the barn to the other side of the house. Against the fence that divided the lots the hen-coop was built. There were half a dozen or more chickens in it.

Jim, when he reached the fence, saw the bull quietly grazing a little way off.

"That's luck," said Jim.

Then he gave a little yell to attract the animal's attention. It didn't take much to do that.

Then he gave the red blanket a shaking. If there is anything a bull hates and will go for, it is a red cloth.

It took but a minute or two to rouse the bovine's wrath and make him furious.

The moment Jim saw him put his horns down and paw and throw up the dirt, he gave the blanket one more shake, and then flung it over the roof and back of

the shambling old hen-coop, and getting round behind the porch, waited for the fun to begin.

And it did begin.

The bull, infuriated, with his head down and horns level, made a wild dash at that red blanket.

He came like a battering ram full tilt, head on, against the cloth.

Crack?

The way that grand charger sent that old hen-coop was "nuts" to Jim.

The chickens in the coop were not much more astonished than the bull.

The bull bellowed; the chickens squaled, the splinters and slats and boards flew, Jim roared at the fun, and just then out of the house rushed old Jed, his wife and the four hundred pound neighbor.

"What on earth is happening?"

"Tain't a earthquake."

Out they came.

"It's that condemned bull! Git in!" cried the old man, turning back.

"Lord-a-massy-on-us!" screamed the old woman.

They skipped into the house in a jiffy. But the fat man, before the cause of the row was discovered by Jed, had waddled out to the edge of the narrow open porch and stepped out upon the ground.

Then he heard Jed's yell, and at the same instant heard the astounding bellow of the bull.

The animal was close upon him; it was too late for a man of his ballast to get back into the house, and in his fright the perspiration oozed out of his fat cheeks like lard oil out of a leaky keg.

Another bellow and a fierce paw of the animal was enough.

"Godelmitey!" puffed the scared man, and his eyes rested on the pump. "Kin I reach it?"

He made a waddle rather than a run for it. He got behind it only in the nick of time, for as he did so the bull made for him and came with a tremendous roar and plunge against the pump.

In his fright at the concussion the fat man dropped, where he stood and then bawling as loud as he could for help rolled over and over, getting over the ground about as fast as if he had been on his feet.

When Jim from his hiding place saw this movement, he was almost tempted to lie down and roll himself.

"This is gay—knocks cork dumplin's higher'n kite!"

The concussion of his head against the pump, however, somewhat stunned the bull. He stood still for a few moments panting.

By this time the fat man had rolled to the barn fence and he got over it safely, but awfully shaken up so completely out of breath that he wheezed and blotted like a North River tug boat.

Beholding this, was old Jed looking out of the window, and yelling:

"Jim, Jim, where are you? Let the dog loose—he Bowze, Bowze!"

But no Bowze appeared, or Jim either.

Bowze, the dog, was calmly slumbering in the barn—where in the daytime he was chained fast.

The bull finding that the pump didn't move or fight back, kicked up his heels, shook his head and then made a bolt for his first love—the remains of the hen-coop and red blanket.

He made a hook at the blanket where it lay upon the ground, and got it fast in his horns so that it hung down over his eyes.

This made him more rampageous than ever, but it took him off from Jed's place, for he dashed off into his owner's lot and was gone.

Then Jed came out cautiously from the house with an old shot-gun in his hand, followed by his wife carrying a pair of tongs.

Puffing and wheezing up came the fat man.

"I'll shoot him—where is the critter?"

"Go—gone!" said the fat man. "Thank goodness."

"Where's that Jim?"

"Here I am," said Jim, with a face on him as long as a yardstick, coming out from his hiding place behind the porch.

"Who let that critter into my place?"

"Let himself in," replied Jim, "and you kin bet big money he got in too."

Jed walked over to the ruins of the coop.

"That air coop cost me ten dollars mos' six years ago," he said mournfully. Suddenly he snapped out. "I'll make the owner of that animal pay for it sure's his born. It's old Skollop's over there the other side of the road. I'll go over this very night and see him."

Having recovered and rested a while, the fat man went away and before Jim was aware of it, Jed had grabbed him and given him an unusually long and sharp interview behind the barn with the strap.

"Now

and of how he could get half way even with the old folks.

"Not one step to-morrow do you go away from this house," said she sharply.

"I'll go fishin'?"

"No you won't."

"Then I'll go over to Si Baker's and play—"

"Not a bit of it. If you stir away from here until we come back I'll give you the awfulest lambastin' you ever had in the hul of your life. An' Jed shall give you another on top of it, mind you."

Jim said no more, but for a while he kept up an extensive thinking.

Then looking up to the clock he said :

"Guess I'll go bed."

"That's the best place fer you," snapped the old lady.

"Yes, when there's no place else to git to," said Jim, as he went to the stairway and began going up slowly.

"An' yer histe up by daylight in the mornin'," she added. "There's a lot to do. Got to load up the guardin' truck, feed the critters and help Jed so's we kin git off in time, early."

Jim stuck his tongue into his cheek.

"There's a lot for somebody else to do, if my name's Jim Jams."

The bedroom of Jed was adjoining that of Jim.

When the latter got up stairs he lighted an ancient style of tin oil lamp and pulling his boots off peered into Jed's apartment.

ing, as bad luck or Jim's wish would have had it came a disaster.

For almost at the same instant, off rolled from the axletrees the hind wheels and down dropped the back end of the wagon, almost lifting the horse from his feet by the jerk it gave the shafts.

In among the potatoes, cabbages and carrots, went Jed and his wife, each grabbing at the other and yelling like a Comanche Indian.

Jed "lit" into a bushel basket of fresh eggs with his Sunday suit, and fairly roared.

The cross old horse, as if to help on the fun, gave his spare quantity of tail, a shake and gave a sudden start which had the effect of setting the truck sliding down with a run, knocking the tail-board out.

Cabbages, potatoes, butter firkin, eggs and carrots, slid in a heap into the shallow water of the pond with a rousing splash. Old Jed on top and covered with mashed eggs.

The old woman had grabbed the seat board and so was prevented from following the truck into the water, and when she let go, the horse had dragged the tilted wagon on its fore wheels on to the dry ground.

Jed extricated himself just as Jim came running up.

"What's the matter—is the old thing broke down?" innocently asked Jim, as Jed struggled one of the mess looking as if he had been mobbed and had escaped by the skin of his teeth.

"Shew!—Phugh!—Ugh!" sputtered Jed. "All

The racket was out and once again Jim "got it" then and there from both Jed and his wife.

Presently Jim jerked loose from them, and as he made off toward the house, he cried out: "That's the sort of circus for me!"

The old folks didn't go to the circus that day.

"I'll send that boy off surer than biled thunder!" said Jed.

"If you don't I will," added his wife.

Which remark led to another big racket from Jim.

## CHAPTER II.

"I TELL you, old coman," said Jed, wiping his spectacles, reflectively, "I tell you suthin's got to be done with him. This here Jam's agittin' to be too much for me."

This is the way Jed opened conversation with his wife on the morning after the trouble with the bull had subsided and the old man had had a high old row with the owner of the animal, who not only refused to pay damages but threatened to "blow that blasted Jim higher than Gilderoy's Kite" if he ever come within reach.

"But, Jed, what kin you do? He ain't got any folks to go to, an' now he's got too big and strappin' for the 'sylum to take him back. What kin you do?"

Jed put his hand into his pockets which was as deep as a mail bag and would hold about as much.



There was an explosion, and grease, and wads of dressing, and pieces of that venerable gobbler were all over the room.

It smelled musty, as all up stairs low ceilinged rooms do in country houses.

Jim's glance rested upon the old man's puffed up feather bed, and then upon the mantel shelf.

On the mantle shelf was Jed's snuff box half filled with rappee, which he always carried when he went to the city.

That box Jim took into his own room, and from the closet where such things were stored, he filled the remainder of the box with red pepper, and mixing it and the snuff well together, retired peacefully.

"I guess he'll sneeze when he pokes that snuff into his nose."

Jimmy laughed and—slept.

Next morning early he was up and out to the barn.

He hitched up the cross old horse, chained up and fed the cross dog Bowze, and in an hour's time breakfast was had, the truck wagon loaded, the cushion put on the seat, and Jed and his wife started.

"Oh, won't you have a good timel" roared Jim, as he kicked up his heels on the porch.

Evidently he had set a new source of trouble for the old man.

He watched them drive out into the lane leading to the main road.

Crossing the lane near its end was a wide shallow pond, fed by a spring. Even in the dead heat of summer it never dried up.

While he was watching them, Jed had been telling Mrs. Jed all the circus experiences of his past life.

In the midst of his talk, and when they were cross-

that there truck and them eggs gone to eternal smash."

"And no circus?" grinned Jim.

"What's that?"

"Nothin'."

"Now, then, you git in an help out," said Jed, using his fingers as scrapers to remove the eggs from his clothing.

In a little while the wagon wheels were got out with the assistance of a neighbor who happened along, and the wheels were put on to the axles, when the cause of the disaster discovered.

"Both them linch pins is gone. Derned ef I don't bale somebody's took 'em out. That's it sure!"

As Jim was flirting about, grinning and looking as jolly as a holiday show, making great pretense of helping on, his big jacket side pockets happened to strike against the old man's elbow making his "funny bones" fairly crack.

"Jemney pelts, what's in your pocket," cried the old man rubbing his elbow.

Mrs. Jed unconsciously thrust her hand into Jim's unlucky jacket pocket.

She drew forth a couple of pieces of iron which looked like big nails.

The old man glared.

"What's them?" cried Mrs. Jed, shaking the pieces of iron in Jim's face.

"Jerusalem. Ther's the linch pins!" yelled the old man.

"They do look like it," said the neighbor.

He fished around and finally cornered and brought up what he wanted.

It was that snuff box.

He tapped it gently on the lid.

He leaned back in his high-backed chair from the breakfast-table.

Jim was through with his breakfast, and stationed himself back near the fire-place, and within easy rapid transit reach of the door.

Jed opened the box.

"As I was a sayin'," he continued, opening the box and glancing toward Jim. "As I was a sayin', Jim's got to be too bracin' altogether, old coman, an' I'm goin' to fetch him up with a round turn, mighty soon."

Here he took a pinch of the nice mixture Jim had placed in the box the night before instead of the snuff.

He held the pinch in his hand and gave the box another solemn tap.

"An' I'm goin' to make you squeal, you young scalawag."

"Thankee, for nothin'," said Jim, grinning, with one eye on the door.

"I've larrupped that thar boy until I'm bout tired of wastin' my strength onto his back. Now, I'm goin' to try suthin' else."

He slowly and thoughtfully lifted the thumb and finger with the snuff between them to his nose.

At the same moment, with his other hand, he pushed his steel-rimmed spectacles above his nose, up to his forehead, in order to have free scope for the perfect enjoyment of the sneeze.

Jim moved a little nearer the door.

"Yaas, I'll do it as sure as his name is Jim Jams—derned if I don't."

Then he drew in his breath, and up went that diabolical red pepper—the entire pinch, into his distended nostrils.

Jim looked as happy as a wedding party.

"Oo—ooch zeme—ooch—chewesar—wah!"

With an awful jerk of his head, over backwards he went.

Down dove his head and shoulders with the back of his chair, and up went his feet under the table.

"Pshew—ooch hash chew-kerchew!"

"Mercy on us, whatever is the matter with you, Jed?" cried the old woman.

Jim made a bee line for the door.

The old man's feet, in trying to get up, got entangled in the folds of the table-cloth.

Another terrific sneeze made him kick his legs out straight, and this resulted in bringing the whole table-cloth to the floor and the dishes with it.

Crash! and the way the crockery flew about like fireworks, was as good as a circus.

The old lady howled.

"Godelmitey!" gurgled the old man, gradually picking himself up out of the wreck, his nose looking like a boiled lobster.

At this instant the old lady caught sight of Jim's jolly face.

She gathered up a wooden bowl and threw it at him.

"You murderin' vagabone."

Jim got out of the door just in time to hear the bowl bang up against the wall.

"Whatever on the broad earth is it?" repeated the old lady.

"It's—it's—durn it—it's red pepper, into my best snuff box."

"That's that dratted Jim's work," said the old lady.

"That rascallion's got to take the all-firedest lickin' any boy ever got since the creation of cats," cried the old man.

"Jes look at dem dishes!"

The old man after shaking himself and finding that his bones were all safe, put on his hat and started out.

"Old 'ooman," he said, "jest you gather up them broken finders," and he disappeared.

He got out on the porch.

He looked around. He did not see Jim.

For the reason that Jim was at that precise moment peering out of the doorway of the barn keeping still further watch on Jed's movements.

"My eye," said Jim, "wasn't that a lark though?"

The old man stood on the edge of the porch, and, in his anxiety to get a glimpse of Jim, stepped down from the porch.

There ought to have been the old board step there, and Jed's foot expected to find it and rest upon it.

But it didn't.

That step was not there. It had mysteriously taken upon itself wings.

It had flown, so to speak. For further particulars see Jim.

Not touching that step Jed's foot went down two feet further than he had calculated on, and the sudden jar made him see a couple of million stars in one second.

Besides he received a go-ahead pitch which propelled him forward at the rate of shooting star speed, and he found himself sprawling out upon the grass.

"When he gained a perpendicular he looked behind.

"That step's bin took away. Dod darn everlasting to everlastin' that Jim. Oh-ooh, won't I dress him. Jim! Jim! where air you?"

But no Jim answered.

Jim just then was rolling over and over, and kicking up his heels in the hay mow, and laughing to split his sides.

"First the red pepper, and the old step—oh, my eye."

"Jim—here, you miserable vagabone—where are you?" bawled the old man.

No answer. But Jim peeped out through the door crack in the barn.

Again the old man called him at the top of his voice.

"Guess I had better humor the old fellow," said Jim to himself.

Jim, having made up his mind, slowly oozed out of the barn and, as the old man said, "slouched up as if he had bin a stealin' chickens, and had them under his coat-tail."

"Come here!"

"Yes, sir," said Jim, with a quizzical humbleness.

"Come up closer!"

"Yes, sir," Jim moved exactly an inch.

"Cluser—only a mite. Jest a mite cluser."

Jim moved a very small mite.

The old man reached for him, and just missed his coat-collar.

Jim didn't dodge, nor step backward. He only turned half around so that the old man's hand slid past him, and its owner came within a hair's breadth of losing his balance, and getting another tumble.

But he didn't. He made another grab, and this time seized Jim.

Then there was an old-fashioned circus of the live-hest character, and the way the grass flew and Jim bounced and performed acrobatic feats in the grip of old Jed was a sight only seen once in a boy's lifetime.

At last Jed tired out, and he let up on Jim.

"Now, next time any of your tricks come to light, I'll send you off'n this farm a kitin'. If I don't my name ain't Jed."

"Thankee," said Jim, turning a cart wheel which landed him out of the old man's reach.

"Now do ya go and ketch that air gobblor and take him head off. The parson's coming here to-morrow to take dinner with us, an' he'll want suthin' nice to eat."

The old man slowly returned to the house, and Jim went off and hunted up the gobblor,

It was an old gobblor. It was an old gobblor when Jim first came to the farm.

"My chickee," said Jim, after he had run the gobblor down and was taking him to the chopping block, "ef that parson gits his teeth inter this old feller, he kin bite a coffin screw in two. And the old man calls that suthin' nice to eat."

Having after two or three cuts at it whacked the gobblor's head off, he brought it into the house.

"There's the old feller," he said.

"Old!" exclaimed Jed, "tain't old. It's a blamed sight too good for you to eat. Though you behave yerself not a morsel 'll you git between your lips, mind that."

Jim snickered and went out to concoct some new scheme,

"I'm goin' to git even for that last warmin' er bust. Lor! wasn't the old fellow wild? Ef he'd had the strength he'd never left me a whole bone. That air step bizness kinder weakened him."

Jim wasn't long in hatching out a little innocent racket, with which he calculated to make things even.

Next day the parson came ambling up from Greenport on his old horse, which had been presented to him ten years before by his congregation.

He had a joyful reception from the old lady.

He was an especial favorite with her.

"Now, parson, you must stay for dinner!"

"Dunno," said the parson, pulling off his black cotton mittens, "hardly think I can. You see I've an appointment over yonder at neighbor Blinks, and—"

"Sho!" said Jed, wiping his spectacles upon the corner of his coat tail. "You must stay for dinner. Won't take no for an answer. Here, you Jim?"

Jim looked in through the half open door.

"Jim, you go an' put up Mr. Pounder's hoss, and mind, you give him a good feed—clean oats."

"Yes, sir," answered Jim, catching a fly and blowing it straight up into the air.

"Behave yourself—you—you—hyena!"

"Yes, sir."

And Jim drew back his head just in time to dodge a tremendous cuff aimed at him by the old man's open hand.

He obeyed the order.

That is, he took the horse into the barn and put him into the stall, hung the saddle up in the henroost—after shortening the stirrup straps to a boy's length, and poured a bushel of oats into the bin.

"If that old crowbait don't bust, it won't be my fault," said Jim.

After fixing these matters to his entire satisfaction, Jim left the barn and returned to the house.

He made his way into the kitchen.

On the kitchen table lay the old gobblor, long, lean and lank, with a hide yellow and hard as shoe leather, upon a huge plate ready for the parson's dinner.

The old lady had roasted it nicely.

Jim gave the turkey a critical examination.

"Wonder if I couldn't," thought Jim.

He stood gazing for a moment at the turkey thoughtfully.

"It's risky, but I'll try it," he added.

He went out to the barn and after fifteen minutes' absence, in which he was rummaging among the contents of a box containing his old traps and scraps, he hurried back to the kitchen.

There was no one in it, and the turkey lay there still.

The old lady was in the "best" room setting the table in holiday style for their honored guest, the good old parson.

Jim fooled very earnestly around the dressing end of the turkey, all the time keeping a wary eye upon the door leading to the best room.

He had just finished his mysterious work at the fowl when the old lady came bursting in.

"Now then, Jim, jest you bring the turkey in an' I'll fetch the taters an' turnips an' cranberries—be keerful, for ef you let it slide off the plate you'll get a everlasting in' troucinn'."

"Yes'm," said Jim.

The old woman took up the steaming hot potatoes, and two other plates of vegetables in her hands and moved into the best room.

"Bring it right along, Jim," she said, as she disappeared through the door.

"Yes'm."

Jim, before starting, and the moment the old lady was out of sight, scratched a match and parting a seam in the skin of the ancient roast lighted something.

Then he lifted up the turkey and marched into the best room.

The table was all ready, and the parson and old lady had seated themselves, while at the head of the table the old man stood bolt upright, carving knife and fork in hand waiting to do his duty.

"Set it up here, Jim," said Jed, "and then go into the kitchen an' wait until we're through."

The parson asked a very brief blessing, and then Jed stuck the fork into the turkey athwart its breast bone.

Then he gave his knife a flourish.

Jim was behind the door outside, listening, grinning and waiting for results.

"You don't let your boy there eat at the first table?"

"Not when we have company," said the old lady.

"Ain't that a hot coal of fire there onto the end of the turkey, Jed?" asked the parson.

"Where?"

The word "where" was hardly out of Jed's mouth when there was an explosion, and grease, and wads of dressing, and pieces of that venerable gobblor were all over the room—up on the ceiling and scattered about the room.

The old man dropped his knife and fork and started back uttering a yell.

The knife dropped point downwards, and struck Jed's toe with the corn on it which made him put in another yell.

"Murder! murder!" screamed the old woman.

"Lord bless us!" roared the parson, digging at half a pound of the soft turkey stuffing which had landed on his face, and spread all over it like a buckwheat cake on a griddle.

"Oh! oh! Lord-a-massy Moses on us!" cried the old lady, throwing up her arms. "My best meetin' dress kivered with grease!"

There never was such a blowing up of Turkey, or spread of gobblor seen on the globe.

Jim only took one peep after the explosion through the open crack of the door.

Then he skipped back through the kitchen and out, as fast as his laughter would permit, for the barn.

"That's worth a dozen lickin's," avowed Jim as he hid himself away in the far corner of the hay mow.

For the space of twenty minutes there was wailing and gnashing of teeth with that upset dinner party.

Every one of them had a share of turkey—spread over them.

A flying leg struck the parson in the chin and made him see stars.

After they had recovered partially and with the dinner knives scraped themselves and their clothing as clean as possible of the loose stuffing, gravy and fragments of gobblor a council of war was held and an examination made of the remains of the turkey.

They found some bits of blacked cartridge paper—that was all.

And that was enough to explain the bust up to Jed.

"By 'cipe!" he said, whacking his fist down upon the table. "It's Jim agin!"

"Eh?" cried the parson.

"It's Jim. I see now. The miserable young Satan has got hold of one of them old blank katridges which we had last muster day an' he's jammed it inter the stuffin' end of the critter and put a fuse to it an' kivered it up with stuffin'. Oh, parson, it's too bad."

"Jed ef you don't get rid of that Jim he'll murder some of us afore he's a year older."

The parson said nothing.

He hadn't got over his fright enough to say what he thought or to think what to say.

"I'll beat him till he's black an' blue!"

"Twon't do any good," said the old woman. "Send him off."

"I will."

"Wouldn't you, parson?" asked the old lady.

The parson wiped his eyes, put on his glasses, and uttered a "hum!"

Then he said, "Yes, apprentice the poor misguided heathen out to some master that'll make him go to church reg'lar, or hire him out if you can't bind him with papers."

"That's it. Now, Jed, jest do that."

"If I don't I'm blowed."

That settled it. Jim was tried, sentenced, and was bound to go.

"Now see here, Jim, you jest take out the parson's horse, and saddle him."

"Yes, sir."

"Then come to the house, an' I'll talk to you."

"Yes, sir."

Jed and the parson walked away to the house.

Presently Jim led the old horse around to the porch door.

The parson, looking considerably soiled with the Turkey explosion, bid Mrs. Jed good-day with a sickly smile, and mounted the old nag.

"Why," he exclaimed, as putting his feet into the stirrups he found his knees brought up to a level with his waist, "what on earth's bin at them stirrups?"

"Maybe they've shrunk up," said Jim, very innocently.

"Youth," said the parson, "leather don't shrink that way."

An examination was had.

The girths were let down to the proper length, and the parson at last comfortably seated in the saddle. Then, after shaking hands, off he trotted—but without even so much as a taste of that turkey gobbler.

Jed caught Jim by the arm and led him into the house—into the best room.

All around was scattered the wreck of that old gobbler.

Tim trembled,

He expected "a lay out" of matter that would make the fur fly.

But it didn't come.

"He's little," said the old man, "but he's jist as full of deviltry as a woodchuck."

Jim had no sooner entered the grocery than he began prospecting the premises.

It wasn't by any means a large grocery. The floor in front of the counter was littered with barrels of potatoes, turnips, cabbages and all sorts of green and dry things.

Piles of codfish, a little butcher's bench upon which was half a fat ham, a hard-looking chunk of dried beef and a few flabby bits of corned pork. Stacks of soap boxes and other specimens of the business of selling as as little as possible and getting all you can for it.

"Now, my poy," began Budweis, who was just that shape that it only needed an internal revenue stamp plastered over his mouth to him into a beer keg, "now, my poy."

"My name's Jim."

"Shim, eh?"

"No taint Shim—it's Jim—Jim Jams for short."

"Der tyself vot a name."

"What's your name?" said Jim, throwing up two potatoes and bouncing them from his elbow into his hand as they fell. "How's that for circus?"

"Here, here, dot vill not do?" cried Budweis, "dis is not der circus."

Jim dropped the potatoes, and went for an apple, one half of which disappeared in his mouth at the first bite.

"Here, here!" Budweis grabbed the apple. "Wot you do wit dese tings? Sthop dot now shust right avay."

weis finished his orders. "Well, I'll try, but if there don't come no fun into it I'll skip out—an' I don't keer a darn what the old man says."

"Shim!"

"Sir?"

"Do you see dot barrel?" said Budweis, pointing toward one of three or four which were standing near the door.

"Yes."

"Vell you shust dake dot hammer und knock up de hoops und dake out de het."

"Sposin' I knock the head in?" suggested Jim, bouncing over the counter as if it had been a fence.

"I'll put mit a pig het on you."

"Pig head yourself," saucily answered Jim, taking a red herring from a box and twisting the head off, which he flipped from his fingers at a big wall-eyed cat which lay sleeping on a pile of kindling bundles.

It hit her square between the eyes. She made a leap for the floor with her tail up like a flag pole and alighted so close to Jim's right foot that Jim couldn't resist the temptation of violently raising that foot so suddenly that she went up in the air with a forward movement which landed her on the counter into a firkin of soft butter, head first.

"Ha, ha, ha! ain't that cat a fool?" roared Jim.

"Mine gott!" cried Budweis. "Hans, bull dot cat ouit the butter, quick!"

Hans the clerk, got the cat by the tail and gave her a sling out of the butter, of which she took out a pound or so on her hide and claws.

Frightened out of her senses, she bolted for the door.



Budweis had scarcely planted his feet upon the head of the barrel, when it gave way, and down he went into the soft soap.

"Jim," said the old man.

Jim wriggled his shoulders.

"Jim, I'm going to-morrer to take you to New York when I go in with my truck—an' I'm goin' to hire you out to Budweis the groceryman, in Ninth Avenue. You ain't no use here. I ain't goin' to stand any more tricks. You've nearly killed the old 'oman. Look at this here room."

Jim had looked at it.

"To Budweis's you go, surer than thunder, to-morrer. He'll take you, surer than thunder, 'cos he owes me, an' I'll git it that way. I'll see if you're worth anything in a grocery."

So it was settled, and the old lady began to get Jim's things ready.

Early in the morning he started with Jed for Washington Market, and in the afternoon the old man took him up to Budweis.

"This is the boy I was a talkin' about a month ago," said Jed.

Then the preliminaries were arranged, and Jed left Jim with his new "boss."

### CHAPTER III.

"Dot poy is ferr schmall mit his age—so short like der milkman's quart of milk in a pint measure," said Budweis the grocer, as he looked at Jim.

"I say, mister—what's your name—wot am I to do here?"

"Wot's your name isn't my name," cried Budweis, whose wrath began to get up; "it's Bodwice."

"Badmice."

"Fur tamter flockter—Bodwice! Now see here, young fellers—you git down quick shoost right avay, or I'll turn out de street into you, und haf nodding more off you all de wile."

Jim grinned.

"What 'm I to do?"

"Shust you dake off your goat, an' git mit yourself right avay behin' dot gounter und I'll dell you."

Jim, turning a handspring over a pile of dried cod-fish, got behind the counter.

"Shim, dis ish mine glork," said Budweis, pointing to a yellow-haired chap who was weighing out three cents worth of tea for a little barefooted ragged girl.

"He's a healthy-lookin' feller he is," said Jim. "Wonder what he gits a week."

"Sheemeny, what a poy! say, now you, Shim, yoost you mind your pizness."

Then Budweis gave Jim his first lesson in what he was to do.

There was enough of it laid out to make Jim wish he was back on the old farm.

"Might as well give me the whole grocery and tell me to carry it off on my back," said Jim, when Bud-

weis finished his orders as a customer was entering just in time to get another boost from a number nine double soled boot.

"Den tousand tyfels! Dot cat cost me more as a dozen tam poys. Git out mit mine shdore!" shrieked Budweis, as the last histe of the cat landed her into his ample shirt front, while her extended claws made a clutch upwards and made a wild rake on his fat double chin.

He dashed the cat to the floor, uttered a howl in sputtering German, and then made a grab for Jim.

Jim turned a cart-wheel flip-flap, and "lit" out of his reach behind a pile of soap boxes.

"Twasn't my fault, Mister Buttermice," said Jim.

"I'll make you sick mit dis tam nonsense," bawled Budweis.

"Then keep yer infernal greasy cat out of people's way," said the customer, thinking Budweis meant him.

"Tam dot poy! for vot tid I ever dake him in?"

"He's took you in," growled Hans, who had grabbed up the cat by the back of the neck, and was red in the face with trying to scrape the butter from her hide.

"Kick him out!"

"I'll pay you for that," said Jim to himself.

When Budweis had cooled down, and returned from the back part of the store where he had gone to wash his face and remove the butter from his shirt bosom, he called Jim.



"Well, yes."

"Dake dot poy. He's shust the pest quickest poy as neffer lived, unt he vants a blace pad. Come pack here und I tells you all about it."

Pillroller followed Budweis to the back part of the store. What Budweis told him Jim never knew, but when the druggist came to the front he said:

"Master Jim, how'd you like to learn to be a druggist?"

"Fust-rate. It's better'n soap an' sugar."

"Well, Budweis'll bring you over to my store this evening, and I'll give you a trial, my boy."

And Budweis did take him over.

#### CHAPTER IV.

"THAT air jalap smasher thinks I'm a goody-good feller and don't wear out shoes a skippin' hop-scotch—one of them Sunday-go-to-meetin' fellers. Guess if he know'd what ole Jed and ole Budweis does, he wouldn't hanker after Jim Jams in his drug shop."

That's what Jim said to himself when, after getting "bounced" from Budweis' grocery, he found himself planted in the drug store.

When he got into the drug store he was taken into a little back room by Pillroller and told what to do.

"Budweis," said the druggist, "says you're a quiet, nice boy and willing to do whatever you're told."

But as the whole of her wardrobe hadn't got in, there was trouble.

Jim shut the door just quick enough to catch the end of her trail in it.

She made two steps forward, and then she got a pull-back she never dreamed of.

It brought her up so suddenly that she lost her balance, her high-heeled boots twisted under her, and over she went with a scream.

As she went over she made a grab for the edge of the marble counter, in order to save herself.

Her fingers only closed on the edge of a small glass-case, full of bottles of fancy scents and perfumes.

So as she went down, down went the case, bottles and all, with her to the floor.

Crash! smash!

The glass flew, and the woman uttered a yell.

Jim, seeing the trouble, opened the door, pulled out the trail, and then awaited results.

The clerk and Pillroller ran around to help the woman up.

They both stooped so suddenly, one on each side of her, that their heads came together with a thump that made their eyes snap.

Then Pillroller, mad and excited, reached his hands down and got hold of her shoulder.

The clerk on the other side did the same with a different result, for he run one of his hands against a

"Pisened!" echoed the clerk who had just tied his hand up.

The druggist in his excitement dropped the glass.

The woman contorted her face into all sorts of shapes, rolled her eyes up and gurgled and choked and acted as if she were in the last agony of a square shouldered forty horse power fit.

"Great Jupiter!" exclaimed the druggist to his clerk. "What was in that glass?"

"Dunno—it must have been part of a prescription—don't think it's pisen!"

"Oh, ho," groaned the woman, "send for—for a doctor. I'm dying, I know I am."

"That infernal boy—where is he?"

"Yes, sir," cried Jim, "all right, sir."

"You blundering booby, come here quick."

Jim, looking as happy and innocent as a prize baby, obeyed.

"What was in that glass?"

"How kin I tell? It looked like water, an' I didn't stop to taste it!"

Jim got back to his station near the door.

The woman twisted and twitched and groaned.

"I'm dying, I know I am. I'll have—have you 'rested. Oh, oh, I'm burning up."

"Get something," cried the druggist desperately to his clerk.

The clerk ran behind the counter, poured something



"You lunatic," cried the clerk. "You've given him arsenic, strychnine and sugar of lead." "Git a stomach pump!" said Jim.

"Bully for Bud," said Jim.

"What's that you say?"

"Nothin'," answered Jim, innocently.

But the druggist had heard him.

"One thing, my boy, I won't have any slang here."

"I wouldn't if was you."

"You're to sweep out in the morning, dust the bottles and do whatever my head clerk tells you while I'm away."

"Yes, sir."

"Run the errands and be polite to customers."

"Yes, sir."

"And never under any circumstances attempt to sell anything without the knowledge of me or my clerk."

"No, sir," answered Jim, his eyes roving around in search of a chance for fun.

"Now then you can go out in the store and for the present stand by the front door and open and close it as the customers come in and go out. When one comes up, open the door; when he or she gets in, close it softly."

"Yes, sir."

Pillroller went out.

Jim followed after, and took up his stand just inside the front door, and began the performance by covertly showing the clerk how easily he could lift up his foot and touch his toe with his lips and perform other circus tricks.

"You're a rooster," thought the clerk.

Presently a lady sailed up to the door and reached for the nob.

Jim opened the door and in she swept, and then Jim closed it.

broken perfume bottle, and uttered a howl and jumped back and fairly danced.

"Godelmitey!"

By this time the druggist had assisted the woman to her feet.

"Jim, here, bring that chair for the lady. Sorry, miss," said the druggist, half out of breath.

Jim ran for the chair and placed it beside the woman who at once dropped herself into it.

The clerk was shaking his hand as if he had an idea of shaking it off—the blood running from it at the rate of a spoonful a minute.

Jim grinned over all this, and was only sorry that it wasn't a bigger racket.

"Jim, bring the lady a glass of water."

"Yes, sir; where is it?"

"Back by the prescription desk."

"All right, sir."

Away went Jim, and in a moment back he came, with a druggist's measuring glass half full.

"Is that it, sir?" said Jim, holding it out.

"Hand it here."

The druggist took it.

"Here madam," he said, and the woman, without any further ceremony, put the glass to her lips and swallowed a mouthful.

It looked just like water, but it wasn't.

Jim had brought the wrong glass.

Instead of water it was a solution of gall, intended for a prescription.

"Oh, oh! I'm poisoned—I'm poisoned!"

Jim bounced himself behind the counter.

from a big bottle into a small wine-glass, and gave it to the druggist.

"Swallow this," said the druggist to the woman.

After a good deal of groaning the frightened woman swallowed the dose.

"Whack'er on the back," suggested Jim. "I swallowed a cent wunst, and old Jed hit me a skite 'tween the shoulders and husted it plum out."

"Shut up."

"Yes, sir."

"It's that boy's fault, mum. He's only been here a day and —"

"Oh, oh, dear, little did I —"

"There, ma'am, you're all right now; you'll soon be over it. That medicine I've just given you will bring you out all right."

In a few moments the woman was all right except that she was shaking all over with fright.

"I—I wanted a prescription put up—but I shan't have it here. Not a bit of it. I'll never step foot into this store again—not for a million of dollars."

"But, ma'am."

"No, sir. And I shall tell all my friends—"

"But really, ma'am."

Jim opened the door and the indignant woman now entirely recovered, sailed out—this time gathering up her trail as she did so, giving Jim a withering look.

Jim didn't mind that.

He only grinned, closed the door softly and whistled.

"Uncle Ned."

"Stop that whistling."

"Yes, sir."

"Now you be careful after this, or I'll break every

bone in your body—d'ye hear," said the druggist, savagely.

"I ain't deaf," said Jim.

The druggist and the clerk went back to their business, and Jim stood on one foot and waited for a fresh customer.

By-and-bye the druggist went out.

Then Jim and the clerk were left alone in the store.

The clerk was a thin young man who looked as if he had been taking pills every half hour of his life.

"Say, boy."

"Yes, sir," said Jim.

"What'd you do before you came here, eh?"

"Heaps of fun!"

"Eh?"

"Had a jolly good time."

"What'd you work at?"

"Didn't work at nothin'."

"How'd you make a livin', then?"

"Didn't make it. I found it ready made for me, and it jest fit, you bet," answered Jim.

"In a drug store?"

"Not much."

"You're a contrary cuss. Why don't you answer straight?"

"I dunno," Jim was tossing a couple of sponges into the air.

"Stop that, no playin' in the store."

"Yes, sir," replied Jim dropping the sponges.

"Now tell me, bub, was you in a store before you came here?"

"Into lots of 'em."

"What ones?"

"I forgot now."

The clerk gave it up.

"Either that boy is an igit or else he's a snide," said the clerk to himself.

"You must look out now that you don't poison somebody."

"I guess nobody ain't goin' to swallow me."

"I mean—"

"You look mean."

At this moment there was a tremendous uproar out on the sidewalk.

"Hello!" What's the row?"

"It's a dog fight!" said Jim, flattening his face against the glass.

The clerk came to the door.

A dog fight will interest most anybody.

"It's a yaller dog an' a stump-tailed bull purp," cried Jim; "an' I'm abettin' onto the purp. He's got a under holt. Ain't that bully?"

"Jim you watch the store till I come in."

The clerk ran out to see the fun.

There was a great crowd gathered about the dogs, and the clerk pushed his way in.

Jim stuck to his post.

Two minutes after the clerk went out a customer came in.

"Where's the boss?" said the man.

"Yes, sir," said Jim, bracing up to the situation.

"Boss I said, not the boy."

"Boss's out."

"That's a nice way to run a drug store."

"What d'y want?" said Jim.

"What you can't give me," answered the man; "you're too little."

"Just you try me," said Jim. "Maybe you think I ain't no dragger."

"Well, I've got a awful stomachache, and I want suthin' to sorter settle it; suthin' sorter sharp and sud-dint in operation."

Jim was dying for more fun. Here was a chance. He knew no more about drugs than a blind pig does about the new testament.

But he did know that there were some things which were not poison in that store.

"All right, sir," he replied to the suffering man. "I know just what'll fix you."

"You're a smart boy—older than you look."

"Dunno bout that. When I was born, my old dad, I spect, didn't know 'nough 'bout figgers to git at the time, and I wasn't particular about it."

"Come, hurry up, git out your dose, if you can, but look sharp you don't make a mistake."

Jim hopped around lively, pulling out one drawer after another.

Then he dove back to the prescription desk.

There were a lot of little bottles on the narrow shelves.

Every one of them had a Latin label.

Jim knew as much about Latin as he did about the Khan of Tartary.

But he was bound to have a racket. Besides he had sense enough to notice that in plain English and with a skull and cross-bones printed above them on the label were the words "Poison," on the dangerous bottles.

These he let severely alone.

Out of half a dozen of the other bottles he emptied a little of their contents upon a bit of paper; then taking an empty glass and half filling it with a white fluid which smelled to him very much like old Jed's tangle-foot whisky, he emptied the little pile from the paper into the glass and stepped out to the customer.

"There, that'll cure the worst stomachache that ever any fellow had."

"Think so? Well, bub, you're sure you hain't made no mistake? If you have you'll be hung for it surer than shootin'."

Jim grinned—"That's all right, just swallow it down at a gulp, and it'll knock yer stomachache higher'n a church steeple."

The man put his nose to the edge of the glass and made a wry face.

"Jimeny, but it's strong. There's whisky into it."

"Of course; there's allers whisky into med'cine."

The man looked rather doubtful, but a sudden cramp inside of him induced him to down with the dose.

He lifted the glass to his lips, drew a long breath, glared at Jim and then swallowed it.

As he did so in came the clerk.

No sooner was that dose down the man's throat than clapping his hands over his waist-band, he doubled up until his head almost touched his knees, and he let out a howl like the roar of a wild bull.

"Oh! ugh! ah! oh!" he yelled.

Smash went the glass out of his hand, and in two seconds more he dropped himself to the floor and rolled over and over again in a lump like a bundle of old clothes.

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! I'm dyin', I'm dyin'—oh—oh!"

The clerk took in the situation at a glance, and turned as pale as a sheet.

Jim cut a pigeon wing on one foot, and laughed.

"That's his stomach that's a botherin' him," said Jim. "He had it awful when he come in."

"Great Galon!" exclaimed the horrified clerk.

"What'd you give him—why didn't you call me?"

"I give him nothin' only a spoonful of dust out of them skull an' cross-bone bottles," said Jim, who saw a chance to frighten the clerk out of a year's growth.

"You wretched lunatic," screamed the clerk. "You've given him arsenic, strychnine, sugar of lead, and—and—oh, Lord! he's a dead man sure!"

This fearful announcement of the clerk made the man on the floor howl and groan louder than ever. He almost rolled himself inside out.

Jim came out from behind the counter, looking as if he had just got up from a turkey dinner.

"Git a stomach pump!" said Jim.

"Idiot!" cried the clerk, who was too frightened to know what to do.

"Oh, Lord have mercy on me!" roared the man. "Oh—ugh—git a doctor. I'll have you hung—hung. Help me up—murder!"

His yelling attracted the notice of people passing by, and in two minutes there were thirty or forty people in the store crowding around the victim of Jim's racket.

"Poor feller!"

"Wat's the matter with him?"

"Send for an ambulance!"

"He's poisoned sure pop."

"These here druggists orter all of 'em be strung up by the neck, dern 'em!"

"Fire a pint of red pepper and whisky into him!"

"Git some hot blankets!"

"Maybe it's a fit!"

"Stand back and give him air," bawled the clerk, coming to his senses, thinking what a fool he had been to leave the store alone.

He inwardly cursed the dog fight and Jim all over.

A policeman rushed in, and poking his club into the ribs of the crowd, made his way up to the yelling man.

The man had rolled about until he looked more like a ragged tramp than anything respectable.

"Keep mum," said Jim to the bewildered clerk. "I'll fix it."

Then Jim whispered to the policeman: "I say, Mister, I b'long in the store. That feller's a reg'lar old rounder, an' he jest come into the store, and that's his little game, sir, shamming sick and makin' b'leve havin' fits, so'st somebody'll give him a big horn of brandy to fetch him to."

This was a whopper!

But the policeman took it in.

Then he pounced onto the wriggling, groaning man, and shook his club at him.

"Git up, now. It's played out. I know you: now, then, bounce."

"Oh, oh," groaned the man.

"It won't do, old buffer," said the policeman, giving the man a whack or two on the soles of his feet to convince him.

The clerk wanted the thing over before the druggist came in. So he grabbed the man by one arm, while the policeman yanked him up by the other and got him upon his feet, but doubled up in the shape of a pot hook.

What with his wrath and pain the man could do nothing but grit his teeth and groan.

He looked as if had been hauled through a knot hole, and then dropped into a dirt heap to dry.

"Guess he'll let his stummick alone after this," grinned Jim. "But I'll bet two fried doughnuts agin a hickory nut he's cured."

"Now then trot along," said the policeman, "and don't you try your drop games on me."

He collared him and hustled him through the door into the street, followed by the crowd.

Jim watched the procession turn the corner. When they were out of sight, Jim turned two or three hand-spring cartwheels, stood on his head and then roared with delight.

"I say, mister, yer dog fights ain't nothin' 'long side of this!" cried Jim to the astonished clerk.

"And it ain't nothin' to what you'll git when the boss gits back."

"He won't hurt nobody!"

"Won't he? You'll see."

"If he goes for anybody, it'll be you, for leavin' the store to see a dog fight."

"What business had you to give that man anything?"

"The boss told me to be polite and mind the customers, and I'm a goin' to do it, if it busts up the concern."

The clerk went back to the place where Jim had fixed up the dose.

Jim followed him.

"See here," said the clerk, "you gave him full proof alcohol, jalap, quinine, calomel, bismuth and—"

"Well, and didn't he take 'em!" retorted Jim, "and didn't the policeman take him—wat more dy'es want?"

"You'll find out when the boss comes. You're goose'll be cooked sure."

"So'll yours, for I'll tell him you went out for a dog fight."

"Shut up. There he is now."

The front door opened and in came the druggist.

"Are you goin' to tell?" said Jim to the clerk.

"Sh!—no—but don't try any such larks again."

The druggist bustled in with two pieces of paper in his hand.

"Here, Sam," he said to the clerk, "put up these two prescriptions right away and send Jim with them to the parties. The address is written on the back. Hurry up now."

Then the druggist calmly seated himself in the back room and read a newspaper.

The medicines were put up and labeled. "Now, Jim, take this to Mrs. Newbag, No. 419 Twenty-first, and the other to Mr. Cranboree, 390 Greene Street. Can you find the way?"

"Can a feather tickle your nose?" was Jim's response, as he took the bottles, stuffed them into his pocket and left the store.

He was gone three hours.

He had just got back and had taken his place at the end of the counter near the door, when in bounced a fat man in a tremendous rage.

He fairly boiled, and the perspiration rolled down his face in fatty balls.

"Here, you!" he bawled in a broken winded voice, flourishing his short fat arm, at the end of which was a doubled up fist, that looked like a pound roll of butter.

"Well, sir?" said the druggist, coming up to the counter.

"Are you the—the apothecary?"

"I am."

"Sir, I'll have you in the Tombs before dark, you—you infamous—"

"Hello, sir, what do you mean?"

"Mean!" snorted the fat man, "I mean business. Ah, there's that boy now," here he looked savagely at Jim; "two hours ago that boy left a bottle of medicine at my house for my wife, who is suffering with—all sorts of sickness. Her doctor says he gave the prescription to you to put up, and—and it's shameful, shameful, sir."

The druggist began to look wild.

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On the top of the chair he had placed a hundred dollar Japanese vase.

"Put that down, you young wretch!"

Jim did so. "Yes, sir."

"I'll find another place for you to-morrow, you vagabond. No wonder Budweis got rid of you."

#### CHAPTER V.

"Now see here," said the druggist looking as savage as Sitting Bull on the war path—"see here, Jim, this sort of nonsense is played out—d'ye understand?"

"Tain't my fault if it are played out," answered Jim.

"If you can't do anything right, don't do it at all!"

"How'm I to know if I don't do it, whether I kin or not?" answered Jim.

"None of your sauce!"

"No, sir." Jim's eye was fixed upon a stuffed owl on a shelf above his head.

"Look at me."

"Yes, sir."

"Now I'm going to try you again to-day, and if you don't toe the mark I'll send you off."

"Where's the mark?" said Jim, looking as innocent as Mary's pet lamb.

"You're either a born idiot or a young jackanapes. Now if you don't want to get bor'nced, just look out for yourself—that's all."

The players were high up in their game, and thinking of nothing else.

The old druggist himself came out and stood close to the table looking on.

"Jim," said the druggist sharply.

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't I tell you to go to the front of the store?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then start or I'll start you, lively."

"Now's my time to give the pill-mixers a lift," said Jim. As he got up from his seat on the keg he reached his arm quietly under the edge of the table and dropped the lump into the water bucket.

Then he "moved" lively towards the front.

Two seconds it took for the thing to work.

Splash, crash; and over went the table, and the noise of the explosion was like that of a small shot-gun.

"Jewhillikers!" roared one of the players, bouncing up backwards from his chair with a gallon of water soaking into his clothes.

"Thunder and chain lightning!" bawled the old druggist, staggering back.

"Jumping cripes!" yelled the clerk, as the table careened over and raked his shins and made him yell with pain and dance like a skip jack.

One of the other players, a tall, lean, lank doctor, whose arms flapped about like a couple of streamers from a flag pole, shot up from his seat so suddenly

faction, and the water dripping from their pantaloons.

The druggist made a reach for Jim.

Jim dodged behind the end of the counter, close to the door.

As he dodged, the store door opened, and in rushed in a tremendous hurry a wild-looking boy.

The druggist grabbed him, and blindly in his wrath mistaking him for Jim, began cuffing and shaking him like a circus dog shaking a coon skin.

"Murder—lemon go—lemon go!"

"Blow us up, you little imp, will you?" yelled he, giving the boy a bat with one hand and scratching furiously with the other.

"Oh—ugh, you cussed ruffian!" cried the lanky doctor making a kick at their victim, which missing him, took effect on the counter and sent the doctor over backwards.

They wrestled the boy about, cuffed and bounced him and wiped the floor with him, and altogether gave him the liveliest warming he ever had in his life.

Then they rested and let up on the boy.

"Why that's not Jim!"

"Thunder and lightning!"

"Where is the internal, miserable vagabond?"

"By Moses, this is awful!"

"My pop'll come down here and whale blue blazes out of yer for this—see 'f he doesn't!" bawled the boy shaking himself.



**Splash! crash! and over went the table, and the noise of the explosion was like that of a small shot-gun.**

"Yes, sir," answered Jim.

"Now go into the store."

"Yes, sir."

Jim did go into the store.

Just behind the little fenced-in prescription-counter was a square table. At this table, when there were no customers to be waited on, the clerk and two or three friends, doctors and medical students, were in the habit of whiling away the time playing euchre.

They were at it when Jim came out.

Under the table was a bucket of water, put there so that it would not be stumbled over in passing and re-passing behind the counter.

Jim picked up from a shelf what looked to him like a white stone.

"Wonder what this donnick is a layin' here fur?" he said to himself.

With it in his hand he sat down on a keg near the players and waited for orders, with the lump in his hand.

"What's this stone?" he asked the clerk.

"Don't bother me," said the clerk. "Ah, heart's trumps, order it up." Then his eyes caught sight of the stone. That's metal potassium. Put it up, it's dangerous."

"Will it bust?"

"Yes if it goes into water."

That settled it so far as Jim was concerned. Here was a sight for a racket he couldn't get over.

He saw the bucket of water under the table.

"Won't it be high old fun?" He grinned as he thought of it.

and in such a fright at the explosion, that in opening his mouth to let out a yell, he let into his mouth the entire stump of a cigar, lighted end and all.

"Ooche—fire—mouth's burning up!" he sputtered and howled, and threw one of his long legs out just in time for the big foot at the end of it to give the old druggist a belt in his bread-basket that doubled him up into a ball on the floor.

Then one of that wretched doctor's long arms swung against a big glass jar which was half-filled with dry "cow itch."

Smash went the jar to the floor, and then that cow itch flew up and spread about in the air—its fine particles like dust falling upon the faces and hands and clothing of the frightened, wrathful crowd.

Jim, seeing this immense fun, laughed till his sides ached, and to relieve himself, turned a series of hand springs.

"If this isn't bully, I'm a gooseberry."

"I'll murder that infernal boy!" groaned the druggist.

"Skin him alive!"

"Wring his neck!"

"Oh, Lord!" cried the clerk, giving his cheek a scratch.

Then the long-legged doctor began scratching, and the rest of them followed suit.

They danced and swore and scratched and dug until Jim was almost crazy with delight.

Then, as if all were struck with the same idea, they made a wild rush toward Jim, every one of them scratching himself as he rushed and roaring for satis-

"Where's that Jim?"

No Jim appeared. But he wasn't far off. He was still crouching down out of sight at the end of the counter and with his fist stuffed in his mouth to choke down the big rousing laugh that wanted to come out.

In fifteen or twenty minutes the druggist and that little card party quieted down.

"I'll make it all right, bub."

"Here's a silver quarter for you."

"It's all a mistake."

"Blast that Jim."

"I'll douse him in a bar'l of cod liver oil and rake it off him with a curry comb."

After uttering these little speeches and doing a little more scratching, the party of sufferers led the boy toward the back part of the store.

Jim peeped out and saw his opportunity for escape.

The door was already partly open. Jim ran to it, and feeling himself safe, stopped on the threshold.

"Say, you fellers," he yelled, "how's that fur pills?"

The druggist turned and made a wild plunge to catch him.

But in his haste he ran bolt up against the upper corner of the counter and whirling around with the force of the collision he tumbled over a basket of sponges, and making a grab at a barrel to prevent his falling, he upset it and emptied over himself a couple of bushels of pulverized charcoal.

When he got up and shook himself Jim was gone. Jim didn't stop to make any further remarks.

The proceedings in that drug-store interested him no more.

"Jewhilliker, great cats, but didn't I stir 'em up," said Jim to himself as he hurried down the street in order to get as far away as possible from that store.

He hadn't any particular idea where he was going, what he would do or how he was to get something to eat and a place to sleep.

But he was as jolly as a lark.

He stopped in front of a butcher-shop where there were a lot of women with big baskets on their arms buying in their store of meat.

At the shop door hung two or three whole sheep, a quarter of beef, and other samples of the stock in trade.

"Jim's mouth watered.

"Jewhilliker, wouldn't I just like to be a boardin' with a butcher though? What a lot of good solid eatin' a feller'd git."

"Say, bub," yelled the butcher's help from the inside.

"Bub, yourself," retorted Jim.

"Here, d'ye want a job?" said the help.

Jim went in. The "help"—a big red-faced, puffy-eyed youth in a white apron, stood beside one of the benches, cutting off a slice of flabby veal.

"D'you holler to me?"

"If you ain't deaf you ought ter know whether it was me hollered 'er a fish-horn blowed. Come in here!"

Jim went straight up to the bench.

"Now see here, little fellow," said the butcher youth, "d'ye want a job?"

"Well, I ain't a-dyin' to keep out of one," said Jim, with a grin.

"I thought you looked as if a little exercise wouldn't hurt yer. See that block?"

"Couldn't help seeing it," said Jim.

"Well, one of the other boy's jest gone home sick from a-eatin' too much raw beef—eat a whole chunk of steak for his lunch, an' it was a kinder too much for him."

"Poor feller, did it hurt him much?" said Jim.

"Sort of worried him, you bet. Now see here, you look as if cooked meat wouldn't set you back—sposin' you take his place till the rush is over, an' maybe the boss'll give you a steady job, eh?"

"I'm your mutton!" said Jim, "man an' money's ready. When'm I to begin?"

"There's a couple of pounds of beef onto that block. Take that air little cleaver and cut it up fine—it's for meat-balls. Chop it into sausage-meat."

Jim didn't fancy the job, but he was spunky.

He took hold of the cleaver and lifted it.

"I dunno whether this is luck or not"—he said to himself, "I'm thinkin' it ain't. Well here goes, anyhow."

Jim tried the cleaver. It was too much for him.

The boss butcher was on the other side of the shop, cutting off steaks and serving a lot of customers.

Jim gave the cleaver two or three whacks at the meat, and then stopped.

"What's the matter?" grinned the butcher boy.

"Nuthin', only I ain't no butcher. Can't you give a feller suthin' easy—hey?"

The butcher boy grinned again but kept on at his work. "You wait an' I'll use yer," he answered.

There was a tremendous big bony cat lying on a shelf just back of Jim.

Jim "gunned" the cat. It was eyeing Jim, as if studying how a nip out of Jim would taste.

"A cat in a meat shop," said Jim.

As he stood there watching the cat for lack of nothing else to do, and debating in his mind whether it wouldn't be the best thing he could do to get out and give up the job, the butcher boy called him.

"Here bub!" he said, "chuck this sirloin into that air lady's basket."

The lady planked her basket close to Jim's feet and was fumbling in her pocket-book for the money.

Jim winked to himself. He took the steak which wasn't very large in one hand and slyly grabbed that hungry-looking cat by the back of the neck with the other, and threw beef-steak and cat into the big basket together, and then in less time than it takes to tell it slipped the lid over them.

He was too quick for any one to notice the movement.

"Steak's inter the basket, mum," said Jim.

She handed the pay to the butcher-boy.

"Thanked, mum. Anything else to-day?"

The woman fooled away twenty minutes of time looking at a rib roast, debating whether she would take it. Then she said she guessed she wouldn't.

She took up her basket.

"Oh! Lord a massy! mercy on me—oh! oh!" screamed the woman. "What's this?"

"What's the matter?"

"She's goin' into a fit."

"Suthin's skeert her out er seven years' growth."

"Ketch her er she'll drop, sure."

Jim put himself nearer the door.

The woman screamed again—"oh—oh—what is it?" and turned all colors in the face.

The butcher boy ran out toward her, and as he did so the crowd of customers gathered around the woman.

Suddenly giving another scream she dropped the basket upon the floor.

The lid flew off when it struck, and out jumped that lean cat.

The female customers screamed and there was a scattering.

The frightened cat bolted out of the store, followed by a cleaver from one of the customers, and a beef shin bone from the butcher boy.

The shin bone didn't hit the cat but it lit out into the middle of a glass globe full of gold fish which a man at that moment passing the door was carrying very carefully in his hands.

Smash went the globe into a hundred pieces, and water and fish and the pieces flew about like a dash of hail and rain.

The owner of the glass globe, savage at the scatterment of his fish, rushed into the shop and collared the butcher boy.

The boss butcher rushed out, the women screamed and Jim roared.

There was for the space of five minutes a lively old time in that butcher shop.

The glass globe man, swearing like a trooper, and the boss butcher pitched into each other, and the butcher pitched him out at last.

The woman with the basket got over her fright. She discovered that the cat had eaten up the small beef-steak bodily.

This time, in the excitement, Jim escaped suspicion. Nobody pitched into him.

"That your cat?" said Jim, grinning.

"Not a wunce," answered the butcher boy.

"It got away with the steak," added Jim, stuffing his hands into his pockets.

The woman got another steak, the rest of the customers were served and went off, leaving the boss butcher, his boy and Jim alone together.

"Who's this kid?" asked the boss, who was a big, red-faced, burly man, looking like a reduced brindle ox.

"Dunno," said the butcher boy. "He's a pick up, I guess. I seen him a standin' at the door, and I thought he wanted a job."

"Wat's yer name?" said the butcher.

"Jim Jams."

"W-h-a-t?"

"Jim Jams, sir," repeated Jim.

"Oh, ho! so yer daddy was old Tremens, was he?"

"No he wasn't."

"Jim Jams, eh? do you want to be a blood spiller?"

"A what?"

"A butcher."

"I ain't particlar," said Jim.

"Well, you mustn't be particlar if you wan't to learn this bizness."

Jim whistled.

"Now see here, young rooster, have you got a home—where'd you come from—tell us all about it?"

"Tain't none of yer business; if it was you'd know as much as I do about it. I'm goin' to skip." And Jim as independent as a pig on ice, started toward the door.

The boss butcher laughed.

"Here, bub—"

"I ain't no bub—old meat puddin'," answered Jim, at the door.

"Come back. You're the sort of boy I want here to help round the shop and kerry meat an' things to customers. Come right along—you're my sort, you air."

Jim came back with a grin all over his fat face.

"What'm I to do fust?"

"Jake, here'll tell you."

"I can't chop that meat onto the block—I ain't used to ingy rubber."

"We'll find enough for you to do."

"'Nuff sed," said Jim.

In came a customer, a big man with a little basket in his hand.

His hand looked as if it would hold twice as much as the basket and room to spare.

He wanted a leg of mutton. He set his basket down.

While he was dickering for the mutton a strange yellow dog—a regular rummer of a dog sneaked in and was nosing around on the lookout for a meal.

Jim quietly snapped his fingers at the dog and threw him a bit of liver.

The dog gobbled down the liver at a gulp, and this taste made him ravenous.

The customer bought his leg of mutton and stooping down shoved it by sheer force into the little basket, leaving the leg end sticking out.

Then he rose up and began bargaining for a piece of salt pork.

Jim cocked his eye about to see if the boss or the boy was looking at him.

The coast was clear. Jim snapped his fingers at the hungry dog, and reaching down touched the leg of mutton that protruded from the basket.

A hint was enough for that dog. He made a dive for it, and in a second his teeth was sunk into the gristle of the leg and he began tugging and jerking.

"Sic—get out!" roared the boss butcher who just then noticed the dog. "Git out!"

The customer got one glance, and uttering a yell he made a leap to save his mutton.

Jim jumped up into the meat block to get a good sight of the fun.

"Git out, you cussed, mangy pup!" cried the owner of the mutton, grasping the ham end of it, and giving it a jerk, but the dog did not let go.

"Pull away, old feller," cried Jim, dropping his hands.

"Git off'n that block," bawled the boss to Jim.

"Hurrah!" shouted Jim; "climb up, boss, and see the fun."

The owner of the mutton gave the leg a jerk, but the dog held fast. His teeth were stuck fast in the gristly muscle of the leg.

The dog held on and pulled and growled, and the customer held on and jerked and filled the air with all sorts of cuss words.

"Jake, go help the gen'l'man," said the big butcher, laughing in spite of himself, "git around there lively, and give the pup a lift in the ribs with your boot."

Jake bounced around just as the customer gave a tremendous jerk at his end of the leg that yanked the dog clean off the floor. But the dog held on, for he couldn't help himself.

Then the customer, hot and excited, and with the perspiration rolling down his cheeks in his desperation,

swung the leg of mutton with the yellow dog at the end of it, around in the air.

The body of the dog struck Jake, the butcher boy, over the face and eyes and sent him kitting head over heels up against the meat bench.

The leg slipped, dog and all from the man's grip, and the dog flew one way and the leg another.

The dog dropped into a pile of chickens tied together in pairs.

When he "lit" he nipped his teeth into one of the chickens, and with the other one bouncing about his ears made a bee line for the front door, with Jake and the boss yelling after him and their customer, puffing and blowing, bringing up the rear.

"Hurrah," cried Jim jumping down from the block, "maybe I won't leave the butcher's trade? oh no."

He ran to the door, and saw the three of them plunging down the middle of the street and the dog ahead of them going at a two-forty gait with the odd chicken dangling from his mouth and bouncing about his head.

"Isn't that a game?"

He danced back into the shop, happier than he had been for a week.

At the rear end of the shop he saw a sausage stuffer ready for use.

He knew the use of that, for old Jed had one, and Jim had helped him make sausages with it occasionally.

There were a lot of skins in a tub ready for filling.

"I'll show that boss what kind of sausages I kin git up," said Jim, and he went to work.

Before the boss and Jake got back from their wild-goose chase he had filled, stuffed and tied two or three strings of fine-looking sausages and hung them up in the front of the shop with those made by the butcher.

Jim, however, stuffed his sausages with wet sawdust. But they looked well.

The boss came in shortly, followed by Jake.

"Blast that infernal dog," he puffed.

"Phew!" wheezed Jake, almost out of breath.

"Git the chickens?" asked innocent Jim.

"Chickens, thunder!" snarled the boss. "Been any one in?"

"No, sir."

Just then in came a customer.

"Want some sausages?" he said.

"How many?"

"Two pound."

"Jim, try your hand at waiting on the shop. Weigh out two pounds of them sausages."

"Yes, sir," answered Jim.

He took down the links of sausages he had made and hung them on the hook of the spring scale.

"Two pounds and a quarter," said Jim, taking the sausages off the hook.

"That'll do," said the customer. "Them's fresh sausages, is they?"

## PART VI.

"I don't think I'm goin' to make much in butcherin'" was Jim's thought—"an' I guess I'll skip into some other sort of place. Jemmy, but ain't I hungry!"

Jim looked hungry, and a hungry boy is dangerous—sometimes.

"I say, mister, can't you give a feller suthin' to eat?" he finally said to the butcher.

The butcher laughed.

"Somethin' to eat—eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Porter house steak rawr—er a pork tenderloin, er a partridge er quail on toast?"

"Don't keer what it is so's it's grub, and ain't any harder'n my teeth," answered Jim.

"Umph!—now see here, jest you wait till I git back and I'll fix you."

The butcher immediately took off his apron, put on his coat and started out, saying as he did so, "keep a sharp eye on the door—if I'm wanted you'll find me next door in the beer mill."

Jim looked savage.

He was tempted to "skip" then and there.

Suddenly an idea struck him.

"Dad durned if I don't git hunk onto him fer his meanness, somehow."

Jim looked around the shop. On the bench lay an

immense ham, off of which had been cut four or five slices.

When Jim saw this ham his eyes also caught sight of a small round file with no handle.

The handle had been broken off and the file thrown aside in a corner of the shelf.

This was the idea that struck Jim, and he grinned over it.

He took the file, and inserting it into the marrow of the ham-bone, drove it in up to the end with the flat side of a cleaver.

Then he waited results.

Presently in came an old woman with an old shawl on her back and an old basket on her arm.

"Got any smoked ham, boy?" she squeaked.

"Yes'm"—grinned Jim—"wait an' I'll call the boss."

A minute after, the butcher left his game of penuckle in the beer mill and came into the shop.

"Want ham, mum?"

"Yes."

"How much—whole one?"

"No. Jest one slice, cut thin," squeaked the old woman.

The butcher was mad. The idea of leaving his game of penuckle and his beer for the sale of a watery slice of ham was enough to rouse any butcher's wrath.

But he said nothing to her.

"Jim, gimme that saw over there."

Jim gave him the saw.

The butcher grabbed his knife and cut down into the ham as far as the bone.

Jim once more got between the butcher and the door—for safety.

"He ain't agoin' to wipe the floor up with me—not ef I know myself," grinned Jim to himself.

Then feeling safe he watched the movement.

The butcher laid down his knife and jerked up the saw.

Then he rasped away through the bone, and then suddenly—the teeth of the saw struck the file.

Rip—zip—zip!

Whang went that ham out of the butcher's hand, while the saw-handle, breaking off with the force of its sudden stoppage, skinned his knuckles and sent the saw flying after the ham.

Jim couldn't help it—he roared!

"Lord-a-massy-Moses-on-me!" squealed the old woman as the ham came to a short stop, like a base ball, against her and careened her over into an open half barrel or corn beef brine as suddenly as if somebody had sat her down.

That butcher shook his skinned knuckles in the air; and oh, didn't he swear and dance for the next two minutes and a half?

Jim ran up and lifted the old woman out of the brine.

As Jim did this the butcher picked up the ham, and looked it over, much as he would have glared at a smoked mermaid.

self. My eye, didn't that old saw go kerzip over that bone?"

Jim forgot his hunger in laughing.

He loafed on until he reached Broadway.

"Jemmy, but I'm hungry," he said; "I could eat stewed boot heels, if I had 'em."

He trudged on up the crowded street until he found himself opposite the Grand Central Hotel.

"Sposin' I had a job in there? You bet I'd eat a whack-in' old meal! Derned if I don't slosh in and see if a bustin' good boy like me can't git a job."

Jim went in and made his way up to the counter of the office.

"Now, then, bub?" said one of the clerks.

"That's me," said Jim.

"What do you want?"

"I want suthin' to do?"

"Bah!—got more boys now than we can kick out in a day," was the clerk's answer.

Jim wasn't a bit discouraged.

He stuffed his hands into his pockets and looked around.

The head porter saw him.

"Say, boy—you—here!"

"Well, what of it? What sort of taffy air you goin' to give me now?" said Jim.

"Don't want no boys hangin' round here!"

"Who said you did?"



"Lord-a-massy-Moses-on-me!" squealed the old woman as the ham came to a short stop, like a base ball, against her.

"That's a almighty tuff bone for a ham to have. That's the first thing I ever know'd that saw to git hold of that it couldn't walk through like a nigger gittin' away with a watermelon."

"Ha!"

This exclamation from the butcher, suddenly added to his other speech, was loud enough to be heard across the street.

"What's this? Jim!"

"Yes, sir." Jim dropped the old woman and eyod the boss.

"By the jumping bull of Bashan, if here isn't a file drove into the marrer of the bone."

Jim looked astonished.

"May be the hog swallowed it, and it worked down into his leg afore he was killed?" suggested Jim, grinning and keeping between the old woman and the door,

The boss pulled out the file and said: "Somebody's driv that air into the bone."

Jim was close to the door, and ready for a bolt.

"Maybe the hog was hungry," put in Jim.

"If I was certain, I'd"—growled the butcher.

"Lord-a-massy-Moses-bless-me," squeaked the old woman, "I'm soaked with pickle through and through."

"Run agin the wind till you git dry," said Jim, as he stood in the doorway.

The butcher made a rush for Jim, but Jim was too nimble.

In a moment more Jim was going around the next corner at a two-forty gait.

"Ketch me! I ruther guess not, not ef I knew my-

"You'd better le movin'!"

"Had I? Well, it ain't the fust of May, is it?"

The port'r grimed.

"What air you loafin' in here for anyhow?"

"Cos I ain't loafin' anywhere else!" replied Jim.

"Ain't you a little—jest a little cheeky?"

"Dunno, do you?"

"You ain't old Vanderbilt's son, air you?"

"You says I ain't?"

"An' you don't look a bit like a savings bank."

"Yes I do—for I'm mighty nigh bein' dead busted."

"Hungry?"

"Hungrier than a starved eel," answered Jim.

"Got any home?"

"If I had I wouldn't be likely to carry it round with me."

"Where dy'e live?"

"Right here, now."

"Cheek enough for any six lawyers," said the port'r, good-naturedly.

"I say, how'd you like to earn your bread and butter?"

"Fust-rate, an' I wouldn't mind a streak of overwork for my meat either," said Jim.

"Good enough. Now see here, one of the ball-boys

is sick—s'pose you take his place?"

"Wat do you s'pose I want to go sick for? Ef he makes bein' sick, let 'im have it all to himself."

"I mean you can do his work here."

"What sort of work did he rastle with?" asked Jim.

"As bell-boy; run of errands and eat his fill of good grub."

"Just the job I was looking for. You're the peach-stone for me, boss. When shall I begin?"

"Now—right away. I'll speak to the feller in the office, and it'll be all kerec, bub."

The porter did go to the office at once, and Jim saw the fancy clerk with his hair parted in the middle and his mustache waxed at the ends, nod his head, smile sweetly and put a clove into his mouth.

"Now, bub," said the porter, "what's your name?"

"James Jams!"

"J-J-James—what?"

"James Jams. Jim for short, with no what about it."

"Jim Jams!" The porter grinned.

"Well, it ain't the first time we've had the Jim-Jams in this hotel; that's one comfort."

Jim was sent down to stairs the kitchen, where he put away or got outside of a hearty meal.

Then he was ready for fun.

The porter told him what to do, and how the numbers of the rooms on each floor were arranged.

"I'm to run up and down stairs, and do whatever they say in the office, hey?"

"That's the finger with the rag on it," answered the porter.

"Take this card up to No. 1,143. If the gentleman's in, get an answer," said the clerk, calling to Jim.

"What shall I tell him if he isn't in?"

"Start, and be quick."

"Number 1,198. That's two floors above the roof, rear building, on the next block, around the corner, isn't it? If I was that feller, an' I ever got up inter my room I'd stay there."

Jim went up with the card, from one floor to another until he gained the right one.

Number 1,198 wasn't in, but the room door was open.

So was the lid of a big trunk. On a rug near the bed lay a fat poodle dog.

It occurred to Jim that the dog might get cold so he picked that dog up by the back of the neck and chucked him into the big trunk, under the tray, in among a pile of clean shirts.

Then he put the tray into the trunk.

"That ere dog's in ef the gentleman isn't!" said Jim.

Outside the door in the corridor Jim beheld a great yellow-eyed Maltese cat.

Jim gathered that cat up and went back to room 1,198, and lifting the trunk-tray deposited the cat in with the dog.

Back went the tray and down he closed the lid.

"What a jolly old row 1,198'll have when he goes for his trunk. When a fellow leaves his trunk open he ought'er have somebody to look after it."

Jim went down to the office.

"Gentleman wasn't in, sir."

"Take this package up to 1,198—same floor, and don't be all day about it," said the clerk.

Jim took the parcel and went up.

By the time he reached the floor he was pretty well winded.

Stair-climbing was a racket he wasn't used to.

He knocked at the door of 1,198. It was exactly opposite 1,198.

The door opened, and a bald-headed man appeared.

"What d'ye want?" he said.

"Here's a bundle for you."

As the man reached for it Jim let it drop.

Smash! and then a yell from old bald-head.

"You infernal blundering idiot!" howled the old one, "what d'ye mean? Do you know what's in that package?"

"Dunno; 'spect it's your other shirt," said Jim.

"I'll report you at the office. There's two specimens of Chinese plates—two thousand years old."

"It's 'bout time they was dropped," said Jim, as the old man stooped to gather up the parcel. "If you'd only said they was plates I'd a had 'em slid in to you on cushions."

At this moment the door of 1,198 was flung open, and out rushed a man with his eyes glaring and his hair standing on end.

"Oh, oh! here—somebody—quick—good Lord—quick!"

Old bald-head slammed his door with a bang.

"That's the second time 1,198's bin biling drunk this week."

"Here, boy, ring a bell somewhere. Send up a porter."

"Won't I do?" said Jim.

"No, yes, here!" The man rushed into his room with Jim and two or three of the lodgers on the floor, who had come out to investigate the row.

There was a terrible time in that trunk.

A howling, yowling, scratching, spitting, growling and rattling never before heard in a trunk.

"Got a menagerie in there?" asked Jim, innocently.

"Sounds like a dog show on the rampage."

"Here, here, somebody open this trunk," said number 1,198. "I—I can't. It's a put up job. I know it is, to destroy my nerves!"

Jim was ready to lay down and roll with laughter.

"Got an invoice of monkeys in it?" said one of the lockers-on.

"It's a couple of boarders," suggested another.

One of the crowd now volunteered to open the trunk.

He knelt down in front of it, put the key in the spring-lock and turned it.

"Be keerful," said Jim.

"Look out," said somebody else.

The man raised the lid and then something flew up and struck his nose and sent him over, gently, backwards.

Out with a yelp bounced the fat poodle, and out

with a terrible scratch and spit bounced the big Maltese cat.

The men got out of the way quick, and out into the hall plunged that frightened dog and cat. Away they flew down the corridor to the staircase at the head of which sat one of the hall girls.

She set up a yell and went down stairs crying murder and fire at every step.

Just as the fat poodle and the cat reached this particular spot, the elevator stopped to let out passengers on that floor.

The poodle plunged in through the door of the elevator. There were three or four women in it, besides two or three gentlemen and the boy who worked it.

"Mad dog! mad dog!" screamed the women.

"Shut the door."

"Let us out!" shrieked another.

The frightened boy gave the rope a pull and down toward the lower floor sunk the elevator with the dog howling in it, and the women in hysterics and crying "murder," "fire," "help," "mad dog," and every other calamity they could think of.

Down went the elevator, and the boy inside who run it was so scared by the screaming that he didn't know whether he was dead or alive.

On every floor as the elevator went down the lady boarders and chambermaids—men, women and children, hearing the racket, set up the cry of fire and murder.

Jim bolted down stairs to the office.

"They're hollowin' fire on every floor!"

"And murder, too! Somethin' awful's happened!" said one of the chambermaids, fainting and falling into a heap against a Saratoga trunk.

"Get out the hose!"

"Send out an alarm!"

"They're chuckin' their baggage out of the window!" said three or four men, rushing in from the front door; "what's up? Where's the fire?"

"Somebody's hove a trunk out of a upper winder, and smashed in the top of a hack!"

There was a big crowd gathered in the street, and the report was all over that the hotel was on fire, and all the people in it were being roasted and baked and stewed.

Down came the elevator with its frightened, roaring load, until, reaching the lower landing, it stopped.

The head porter slammed the door open and half a dozen policemen who had just rushed in pulled out the women.

Out bolted the fat poodle.

"There he goes. Mad dog!" cried one of the women.

"Mad dog!"

The crowd scattered right and left and the poodle had a clear run for the front door.

Jim ran here and there and put on a huge show of being terribly frightened.

The clerk with his hair parted in the middle in his excitement grabbed up an umbrella, hoisted it and ran wild about with it over his head.

After a while, the excitement subsided and then the wretched clerk got out from under his umbrella, and things went on as usual.

"Jewhillikins!" exclaimed Jim—"but wasn't that a racket? Talk about yer big shows an' crystal palaces an' Kentucky giants—why they ain't nowhere long side of it! Ef I don't git my fill of fun in this hotel, I'll shut up shop. But wouldn't the landlord warm me if he know'd who it was!"

Next day Jim was bouncing about as usual, as happy as a whole shoal of young mackerel.

On that day there came to the hotel a gang of Indians on their way to Washington.

They were got up in full rig and were headed by an interpreter.

"What a lot of greasy old paint pots," said Jim, when he saw them.

They were lodged on the third floor in a room by themselves.

The interpreter was with them.

Jim was appointed as one of the special boys who was to wait on them and the interpreter.

"Who's that old hyena over there?" said Jim to the interpreter.

"That's a big chief—The-young-man-afraid-of-his-grandmother."

"Jewhittaker, what a name?"

"And that other one is, 'Bison-that-eats-wheelbarrows.' He's a fearful old fighter."

Jim thought how nice it would be to fix the noble reds with a lively racket of some sort.

"Ugh!" said one of the warriors.

"Go and see what he wants," said the interpreter; "that's Hopping-toad-on-his-ear; he can speak English."

Jim went over to him.

"Well, old Hop Toad, what is it?"

"Ugh—big Injin—me—much dry."

"Yes, you look dry. Want a bucket of water?"

"Ugh no want water. Water good for great rivers, and make rain. Bring me whisky."

"Your head's level, old Heppy," said Jim. "Dy'e want it strong?"

"Moochee—ugh—burn hot," was the answer.

"All right." Jim went down and on his way back he stopped into the porter's room, when he found a bottle full of kerosene.

This he captured and brought up.

Hop-toad-on-his-ear was waiting his coming.

So was the "Young-man-afraid-of-his-grandmother."

"I'll make 'em all afraid of their grandmothers," said Jim.

"Ugh, pale face youth," said Hop Toad "got the fire-water? Big chief will not forget the white face."

Hop Toad grabbed the bottle.

The rest of the warriors came up for a share.

Hop Toad gulped down four or five swallows of the

kerosene and smacked his lips. "Ugh, big strong; makes the great chief's heart dance."

Then Young-man-afraid-of-his-grandmother took a stiff horn, and then Bison-that-eats-wheelbarrows went for it; and by the time the rest were ready for a nip there wasn't a drop left.

Jim expected that dose of kerosene would settle them, but it didn't.

"More, more!"

"I'll get it."

Jim went down and brought up a gallon jug of the kerosene.

Then the way the "old paint pots" went into it was a caution to distilleries.

When the interpreter got back from where he had gone to get a private drink on his own hook he found the warriors howling drunk.

## CHAPTER VII.

"I GUESS them Injuns wont want to tackle pale face kerosene again in the next six months," said Jimmy Jams to the interpreter.

"If they do git another gallon of that blasted stuff into 'em, they'll scalp the entire hotel. I wonder where they got it?"

"Dunno," replied Jim. "I know where they didn't git it."

"Well, young touch-and-go, where didn't they get it, eh?"

"They didn't git it av the bar-keeper, cos if they had a got a lot of that, I wouldn't have been into his boots for all he's worth."

"Why?"

"They'd a gone for him."

"Gone for him?"

"You bet they would. Why, I know'd a little party of rounders went up to the bar the other night and got outside of some of that whiskey."

"Well?"

"An' it wasn't more'n half an hour before one of 'em exploded—busted like a steamboat biler, and come very near settin' the hotel on fire. Wy, when he busted, his head went off like a cannon ball out of the back winder, and one of his legs went a whirlin' clear into the ceilin'. I tell you it was powerful whiskey."

"See here, bub—don't lie. If that barkeeper's whiskey blowed that man up, why didn't it serve the rest of them in the same way?"

"Well—you see, boss, they took water in theirn and that kinder took its strength away. They didn't feel well though, an' when the other feller busted, they just skooted for the sidewalk, an' yelled 'fire' like a set of loonyatics."

"Bub, you're fresh—you are," said the interpreter.

"An' you're stale as last year's eggs," answered Jim, as he tumbled himself off down stairs to the

bookkeeper who was leaning against his desk smoking a cigar, and looking as happy as a lord.

The bag "lit" on the floor, and the moment it struck that bookkeeper dropped his cigar, jumped backwards up against the office safe, and let out an oath and a yell.

"Thunder and Jupiter, what's that?"

Squelch! and then a howl came from the carpet bag, and the bag itself rolled and twisted about as if it were alive.

"Godelmitey! look at it!" cried the bookkeeper.

"There's suthin' in it," cried another one of the clerks.

"I should say there was."

"Tramp onto it."

"Tramp on it yourself if you want to."

"Take it out."

Up came two or three of the porters, who had seen the commotion behind the counter.

"Here, Jack," said the clerk who looked pale about his ears, "git in here and see what the infernal thing is."

Jack came in and took up the bag. He was a big, pug-nosed porter with flaming red hair.

"I don't see nothin' to be afeared of," he said, giving the bag a shake.

"Well, open it."

"P'raps somebody's packed a live cat into it er a pet rabbit."

"Cut off his tail," cried another.

"Speak to him gently for his mother," suggested the bookkeeper.

"Put it in his bill."

"Send for Barnum."

"Where's the monk's boss?"

"Take 'im up to his room."

"Put him in his little bed."

The bookkeeper and the clerk didn't see any fun in this.

The clerk picked himself off the floor, and having dug the ink out of his eyes, got away out of sight.

The monkey cavitated on to the gaspipe, swung himself by his tail, then dropped to the floor and skipped up the broad stairs chattering with delight.

Jim was roaring and laughing, and dancing about.

"That monk's as good as a whole menagerie."

It happened that the majority of the boarders and guests were at dinner up stairs.

When the monkey got up to the second floor he made a grand waltz for the dining-room.

Into it he went.

Then there was a rush.

He pranced up on a table where three or four ladies were enjoying their turkey and other delicacies.

They set up a scream and jumped up.

A waiter, rushing past with a plate of soup in one hand and half a dozen dishes of vegetables, meats and

"Take this gentleman up to that room."

"Yes, sir."

Jim looked at the bit of card.

There was nothing on it but the Number 966. Turned upside down it was 966.

Now Jim knew it could not be 966, which room was occupied by a high-toned middle-aged man, who was a French count or baron, or something of that sort whose English was as bad as the cigar he was smoking while in Number 966 there was a newly-arrived western man, with a fierce moustache, loud voice and a big watch chain.

"See here, bub," said the man to Jim, "what's the number of the room?"

"966."

"Umph! See here, now there may be trouble up there."

"Why?" asked Jim.

"I'll tell you, I am an officer. I have orders to arrest a man who is here under an assumed name."

"Wat sort of a feller is he—a fancy lookin' duck, a high toner, eh?"

"That's the description—that's him."

"Makes believe he's French, eh?"

"Like enough; these confidence operators'll make believe anything—that's my man."

"Well, that's 966 I guess," said Jim, grinning to himself.

"You wait after I knock. If there's any trouble you



**Smash went the dishes upon the floor, and away went the waiter with the monkey riding on his shoulder.**

"I'll open er an' we'll see."

Porter Jack turned the key of the bag, and pulled apart the mouth of it by the handles.

No sooner was this done, than out bounced the monkey full into the face of the porter, and lighted on his shoulder.

The sudden appearance of this sort of contents of a carpet-bag frightened the porter almost out of his wits.

"Howly mother of Moses!" he yelled. "It's the oold devil himself!"

The monkey barking and chattering, leaped from the porter's shoulders toward the book-keeper, who bounded head and heels over the counter, leaving one of his coat-tails ripped off and hanging to a nail which had caught it as he went over.

The chief clerk made a dive to follow the book-keeper but the mad monkey was too quick for him.

He made a spring for the counter and grabbing up a big open-mouthed inkstand in his paw tossed it at the clerk.

It struck him on the shoulder and in a second that clerk's face, tall stiff-starched shirt collar and bosom were in the deepest sort of mourning, and his eyesight blacked up with ink.

Spluttering and yelling he made a blind rush to get out, and ran bang against the door of the safe and was sent over backwards by the concussion to the floor.

Meanwhile the monkey leaped about turning books and pens and papers to the floor or throwing them into the air.

"Shoot the brute," howled one of the parties who was trying to look solemn over the fun.

and sauce in the other, met the monkey, and monkey made a leap for his shoulder.

Smash went soup plate and the rest of the dishes upon the floor, and away went the waiter the whole length of the dining-room with the monkey riding on his shoulder and his paws wrapped about his neck.

What with the screaming of the women, the yelling of the waiters, the laughing of the men and the upsetting of things and rattling and crashing of dishes, it was about as big and lively a circus as any small boy like Jim ever kicked up, or ever will again.

"Wouldn't I just like to own that monkey," said Jim to the head porter as they listened to the awful racket in the dining-room.

The monkey at last quieted down and rested himself on the broad cornice of one of the windows, where he was finally captured and tied fast to a trunk in the baggage-room.

In the row and confusion the fact of which bell-boy it was who had brought down the carpet bag was forgotten, so Jim wasn't suspected.

It wouldn't have made any difference to him if he had been.

Jim was in for fun and he was bound to have it—out of somebody.

No sooner was the monkey trouble over and the hotel settled down to its usual condition of things than Jim began looking up another racket.

It didn't take him long to find one.

"Here, Jim," said the clerk next morning.

"Yes, sir," answered Jim.

The clerk gave him a card.

dive down and send up a couple of the porters. Dy's understand?"

"You bet. Wot's the feller bin a doin'?"

"That's not for you to know just now."

They reached the door upon which were the figures 966.

The officer paused a moment and listened at the key-hole.

Then he knocked softly, as if he were a timid washer woman just come for the clothes.

Two or three minutes elapsed, and then the door opened and the French count was visible.

Jim stood behind the officer.

The officer stepped into the room.

Jim knew the officer was making a mistake, and that there would soon be a jolly old row.

"Bob Banger, alias Joe the litter, I want you."

The Frenchman stared.

"Ze what for you want—ze Bang—Monsieur Bang is not ere. Zis iss not hees apartimong—non, non."

"Oh, none of that now. I'm fly to your little dodge. It's all very nice, but it won't do. Just you drop on yourself—take a tumble and give up quietly or it'll be all the worse for you."

The officer placed his hand on the count's shoulder. The count indignantly threw it off.

"Sacré! Mon Dieu—wat you mean, rascals—ze tumble—ze drop—you make a ze grand mistake, sare!"

"That wont do—it's thin—very gauzy. You're a count, are you? Count of no account. Now, Bob, just git your hat and start peaceable. If you don't I'll put the irons on you, sure pop."

Here the officer turned to Jim.

"Bub, you run down and bring up one or two of the porters. This here feller is trying to play it fine, he is," he whispered.

Jim waltzed off, saying to himself, "If I could only git that monkey loose wouldn't it be high?"

He went down and told the head porter.

The head porter and two of his men made a bolt up stairs.

Seeing the rush of the porters, the clerk followed them to see the fun.

Jim brought up the rear.

When they got up to the room they found the officer and the count having a lively old time.

They were rolling and wrestling over the floor together, both puffing and blowing and swearing, the count in crooked French and the officer in the wildest sort of Sixth Ward English.

The counts fine broadcloth coat was split up the back to the collar and his wig jerked off leaving his head as bald as a tombstone.

His full set of teeth also ornamented the carpet and a glass eye had dropped out and lay beside the teeth staring up as naturally as if it was in its place in the count's head.

The officer was red in the face, with a scratched nose and the greater portion of his shirt pulled out up under his chin.

"Here—here—stop this," roared the clerk.

"Not a stop," puffed the officer giving the count's neck a wrench, "not till he gives up."

"Sacré—Mon Dieu! man. Dieu—zis—zis—beast—roofian—he is ze dam lunatic—what you call 'em—craze—eh?" wheezed the count.

"Stop—here you," said the clerk to the porters, pull them apart—it is a mistake."

Two of the porters rushed in, both laughing, and very suddenly catching hold of the count and the officer, pulled them up to their feet very much as they would have yanked a couple of trunks on end.

"Don't let him out—hold on to him!" cried the officer.

"Ze assassin! Call ze gens d'arme! Ze what you call make dem—ze police—ar-r-restez him!"

"Here, here, gentlemen, this is a mistake. This idiotic Jim has done this. Officer, this is not your man. He is in room 996 up above—this 966."

"What sort of taffy is that you're agivin' me?" growled the officer.

"I tell you it's true—surer than shooting," said the clerk.

"Ze wretch, he knock out my teeth."

"Oh, shut up," said the officer, beginning to see that he was "in" for it.

"And zen iss my loafy wig!" wailed the count.

"Look at my shirt," said the officer. "You French frog-eater."

"Gentle homme—see zee fine coat—zee rip in zee back. By gar, I sall have ze satisfazione for zis contemp-able insult—mon Dieu! zere is—"

"Dry up!" said the officer, "why didn't you tell me you was a count?"

"I tid—I tid—on ze honneur of ze Pere of France."

"Come, this is that boy's mistake in taking you to the wrong number—he turned the card upside down and—"

"Oh, oh," roared the count, who just then discovered that his eye was missing: "zere is my eyes turned out—on ze dam carpet—zis is a free country, eh?"

At last the row was settled—and the count pacified by a promise on the part of the clerk to pay him damages and an apology from the officer.

Privately the porter and clerk roared over the dilapidated condition of the count, and the clerk inwardly resolved to give Jim a fusilade of kicking and then boost him out of the establishment.

The officer, under conduct of the porter, went up to 996.

The door was open, and they went in.

The gentleman "from the west" had skipped.

He had heard the row, and was gone.

The clerk, when he got below, looked about for Jim. "Where's that young idiot—Bell-boy Jim?"

"Went out just now," answered one of the porters—"said he was going out to look for Number 966."

The clerk looked sick, but said nothing.

Jim went out.

"I don't think hotel work 'll suit me any longer," grinned Jim, as he went up Broadway, "and I guess I'll try suthin' easier."

He wandered on, taking a survey of things as he passed.

He paused in front of a restaurant.

"Wouldn't it be a big thing to get into a restaurant?"

### CHAPTER VIII.

Jim stood a few minutes in front of the window of the dining-saloon looking in.

His nostrils caught the odor of the good things inside which filled the bill of fare.

"James! I'm hungry. I wonder if I couldn't kinder glide into a little sort of rake in there? Golly, but them big pies look fillin'."

Jim waited no longer. He waltzed in up to the counter where a little, narrow-faced man sat taking in the money.

"I say, mister?" said Jimmy.

"Well, cherub," answered the man. "What's your ticket?"

"I aint no cherub an' I aint got no ticket."

"Then what's your little game?"

"I hav'n't no little game, mister."

"Stan' one side there and wait for somebody that has," was the man's reply.

"That's just what I want to do."

"What is?"

"Why, to wait."

"Wait—what for?"

"I mean to wait on the tables."

The man laughed.

"Well, for a small package you're hefty on cheek, young 'un."

"Kin you give a feller a sight, or do you want some other eatin' shops to git me?" said Jim, craning his neck up, and standing on tip toe.

"Don't stretch up any further, my pippin," said the man. "Guess we don't want you any longer."

"Air you the boss of this grub mill?"

"No."

"That settles it," said Jim.

"Settles what?"

"That's nothin' to you. I wants to see the boss."

"He ain't in; he's out."

"I'll wait for him."

"He won't be home till to-morrow."

"I'll wait here then. Time is nothin' to me."

The man began to get wrathy.

"Don't I tell you that the boss isn't in?"

"Am I saying he is in?" retorted Jim.

"Then why don't you light out of here?"

"Cause this isn't my day for lightin' out. It's my day for lightin' in, mister."

Jim crammed his hands into his pockets as he said this and tried to look as independent as a New Jersey judge.

"Well, this is gittin' serious. Take my advice and git."

"Wat'll I git for?"

"Git for good."

"Wait till I get hold of the boss, an' if I don't make it hot for you I'm no Jim!"

"Look here, do you know what bounce means?"

"You bet I do."

"Well, I'll bounce you plum out of the front door."

"That won't keep me from seein' the boss. I'm used to bein' bounced. I served my time at it."

"Well, you're the worst I ever saw. If you was big enough I'd hire you myself."

"Size ain't nothin'," said Jim; "if it was where'd you be?"

The man grinned, and after shuffling half a dozen checks into the drawer and shoving half a paper of fine cut into his mouth he replied:

"You ought to make a good plate spinner."

"What's a plate spinner, a circus chap?"

"No, it's a waiter."

"Put me down as a spinner. Where's that air boss?"

"Kin you toss the tumblers?"

"What?"

"Rattle the glass?"

"What sort of taffy air you givin' me? If you want a feller, say so. If you don't I'll try the boss."

"I'm the boss."

"You air. Well I'd never have knowned it if you hadn't a told me."

"You know it now. Will you take hold and help around the saloon for your vittels?"

"Vittels is grub?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'm your man. Where'm I to sleep, hay?"

"You don't want to sleep now?"

"No, I don't."

"Then don't be in a hurry. Are you hungry?"

"Ain't I though? Just you try me, boss?"

"Go back there to one of the tables and git outside of a square meal. Then come up here and I'll put you to work earning it."

"All right, boss."

Jim sailed back to one of the side tables.

The saloon was pretty well filled up, and half a dozen waiters were rushing back and forth serving customers.

Jim sat down at the end of the table.

Directly one of the waiters made a dive at him.

"Well, bub, what'll you have?"

Jim studied a moment, and then having made up his mind, answered:

"Fish balls!"

"Sleeve buttons for one!"

"That feller's crazy," said Jim to himself.

A man next to him ordered dumplings, and the waiter yelled out:

"Solid shot biled for one!"

A customer at the next table asked for pork and beans. The waiter immediately roared out:

"Ro-meo and Juliet—plenty of Romeo!"

"Derned ef the whole keboodle of these fellers isn't looney!"

Up came his fish balls.

They were brown and as hard as bullets, but Jim had an appetite, and he went at them like soldiers at his hard pan.

While he was eating he noticed two or three of the waiters carried, each one of them a dozen or two dishes and almost as many cups of coffee at once.

This suggested to him a nice little joke.

"By Jinks, won't it be fun? Wonder if I can't?"

To plan out a bit of fun with him was to do it so far as Jim was concerned.

He watched his chance.

There was one big fat waiter who always came along from the carvers' with a pyramid of dishes on his arm and in his hands.

It was awful the way that waiter piled them up on his left arm.

Pork, beef, pudding, cakes, coffee, tea—everything all jumbled together, and how in the world he ever got them separated was a puzzle to anybody who didn't understand it.

Jim concluded this waiter would do to experiment on.

Presently along came the fat waiter, loaded.

As he came up the narrow aisle between the tables, Jim very quietly extended his foot out beyond the legs of his table.

Of course he did it accidentally.

The fat waiter came puffing and sneezing up to deliver his load at the various tables.

Jim's foot was in the way, and over tripped that fat waiter, and down went his dishes with him.

Squelch!

And then a yell and a tremendous crash of crockery ware.

Everybody started up, and the rest of the waiters paused in dumb horror at the fate of the fat waiter.

When he was falling a cup of boiling hot coffee flew off the top of his pyramid and struck a table in front of a swell book-keeper and soaked his shirt-bosom and nobby coat breast.

He rose up in his wrath, and fired off profanity enough to supply a dozen car drivers.

Two of the waiters rushed in and lifted that wretched fat waiter to his feet.

His face was covered with rice pudding, a slice of pumpkin pie was plastered on his shoulder, and a plate full of sausage grease was mixed up with his hair.

He sputtered and puffed, and blowed, and while one of the grinning waiters was scraping out a layer of custard and hash from his apron he was digging out mashed potatoes from his eyes and off his nose.

"Poor fellow," said one of the sympathising customers; "that'll cost him half his month's wages."

"That comes of luggin' big loads."

"Thought he'd slip up on it when I saw him."

"If I was the landlord I'd fire the careless cuss out."

"Save the pieces."

Everybody had something to say.

The fat waiter, as soon as he recovered his wind, grew red in the face with wrath.

He knew he had been tripped.

"Two boxes for a quarter, you said, and the feller took two of them."

At that instant the boss looked out towards the door, and caught a glimpse of the beat going out with the two boxes.

The whole thing flashed upon his mind.

Jim was grinning all over.

"You infernal idiot, I said the cigars in those boxes were two for a quarter not two boxes for twenty-five cents," and he dropped his checks and made a dead bolt after the stranger.

Jim followed to see the fun.

So did three or four of the customers, so did two of the waiters.

The boss collared the man not a dozen steps from the door.

"Come back here you infernal beat, and give up those cigars—you—you swindler. I'll have you locked up."

The crowd gathered to see fair play of course.

"You said two boxes for a quarter."

"It's a lie—I didn't do no such foolish thing."

"Take your hand off my collar," said the beat.

"I won't—till you give up those cigars."

Whereupon the beat coolly dropped the two boxes of cigars on the pavement at his feet and then astonished the landlord by suddenly jerking him from his feet and giving him a sideward boost, landed him whang in a sitting position on top of the boxes.

time to get the full benefit of that turkey on the side of his official head and making his off ear sound like a base drum.

"Thunder and chain lightning!" cried the policeman, making a grab at the first man in his reach, who happened to be Jim's victim, the unfortunate landlord.

"I'll take you in anyhow!"

"But—here I'm not—" puffed the landlord.

"Dry up, or I'll give a dose of club sass. Now, where's that loafer that's slinging that turkey?"

The turkey slinger had disappeared.

"Where's the other fellow?" was the next query of the policeman.

The other fellow—the "beat" had vanished to.

"Look at them cigars!" cried the landlord; "gone to smash. I'll skin that boy alive—it's all his fault—the blazing idiot!"

Jim heard him, but kept out of sight.

"Come along—I'll take you in anyhow!" and the officer grabbed him by the shirt.

"Lemme go in an' get my coat," groaned the boss.

Finally after much persuasion, the policeman consented to this delay, his ear still humming from the effects of too much turkey.

When they got into the saloon the matter was more fully explained, and at last the officer went away.

Jim skirmished in looking as innocent as a lamb.

"Why, Jim Jams—never had any other name, an' I don't want any other."

The landlord laughed. He couldn't help it.

"Jim Jams," he repeated, and laughed again.

Then Waiter Baggy ventured to laugh.

"Who're you laughing at?" said the landlord, sharply.

Baggy lengthened his face, and looked so suddenly like a one mourner power funeral in a snow-storm that Jim roared.

"Oh, what a face!"

Baggy gave Jim a crushing glare out of his fishy eyes, which only made Jim laugh all the more.

All this time customers were coming and going, and the landlord taking in the checks and money.

"Take him away, Baggy, and let me know how he gets along after the rush is over."

"I will, sir," was the short cut reply of Baggy.

"Come along, young three cent piece."

"Yes, sir." And Jim followed Baggy.

Baggy took him back behind a screen, when Jim thought every roach that came out was bigger than the last one, and any one of them large enough to walk off with a loaf of bread.

"There, put that on," said Baggy, handing a white apron.

Jim put it on. It fitted him about as well as his jacket would have fitted one of the wild, untamed



**Jim's foot was in the way, and over tripped that fat waiter, and down went his dishes with him.**

Smash went the boxes flat as pancakes and those cigars wern't worth as much as a raw apple dumpling.

"Godelmitye!" roared the landlord.

"Ha, ha, ba!" shouted the lookers on.

"Who's the fool now I'd like to know?" said Jim with his hands in his pockets.

"Come any of your red tape 'round me will yer?" said the beat. "Maybe there's another fellow that wants to sit down and rest himself?"

Just then Jim spied a policeman sauntering slowly up toward the crowd.

Here was another chance for Jim.

He dodged out of the crowd, just as a couple of the waiters were lifting the astonished boss to his feet.

He ran up to the policeman and said: "That air man in his shirt sleeves bin a-punching that tall teller."

The policeman hurried up to the crowd just in time to see the "tall feller" walloping and wrestling with the two waiters, and by the period the officer got into the midst of the crowd, two or three others had joined in, and mashed hats and loose profanity were flying about in the air like feathers in a high wind.

Somebody pulled a wild turkey from the door of the saloon and flung it into the crowd, which caused another howl.

It was picked up again, and one of the waiters grabbing it by the neck, began knocking and slamming with it right and left.

"Hello, here, what's this row all about?" bawled the policeman, elbowing his way to the belligerents just in

"You young vagabond, come here!" said the landlord.

"I ain't a vagabond. It's that cigar chap you're thinking of."

"Didn't you know any better than to let that skunk carry off two boxes of cigars?"

"I didn't let him—he let himself."

"Shut up! You're smart on the chin, but you're not fit to be behind the counter. Now you git off back there, and see what sort of a fist you make at waiting on the table."

"Yes, sir," grinned Jim, taking up a doughnut from a pile on a table.

"Drop that cruller—put it down."

"Yes, sir," said Jim, and down it went—into his mouth in two bites.

"Baggy," called the landlord, "come here."

Baggy was a big-headed waiter with a pug nose and a snap to his voice as if it had been left out over night in the frost.

"Baggy, take this boy back there and give him an apron, and set him to work."

"What at?"

"Anything—it don't matter. I'll give him a trial. By the way, what's your full name?"

"Mine?" said Jim.

"Yes—your full name."

"When some peoples' full, it's Jim Jams."

"What's your name?"

"That's it."

"What's it?"

roaches that were playing circus and hop scotch all about him.

"Now, then, hustle out and help meat my tables—them four on the center aisle. Dy'e see?"

"Yes, sir."

Baggy gave Jim further instructions—as to waiting on customers—and being quick in yelling out his orders so that the carver could hear him.

Jim said "Yes, sir," to everything.

Mental he said, "you be busted old puddin' pot."

Jim in his apron which flopped about him like a flag of truce around the stumps of a mainmast, went to work.

He didn't like it. The apron, not the work.

"If I don't have it out with these fellers, I'm a sculpin—thats all."

And he kept his eyes open and his wits sharpened for any sort of a chance, no matter how small, by which to have another racket out of the place.

One bald headed old gentleman and a bushy haired man with a tremendous outstanding pair of whiskers came in and planted themselves on each side of Jim's table.

"Chickin soup!" said the bald head.

"Rosbeef, mash-potatoes, lean-an-well-done," said Whiskers.

Jim in his shrillest tones yelled out: "Chickin soup, rare, plenty of gravy, one ros-beef, mashed—with lean potatoes, well done—biled!"

Bald head frowned, and Whiskers scowled.

Jim grinned. Then he went after the orders.

The soup was red-hot, and grasping the plate in one hand with the bowl of soup in it he carried the plate of meat and potatoes in the other.

Carrying soup in a plate wasn't his forte.

Just as he came up behind old bald head he continued to wobble the soup bowl so that the steaming contents slopped over.

A drop of the hot fluid struck the scalp of that bare head.

"Ouch!" cried the sufferer, turning his head precisely in time to strike it as soon as Jim lowered it to place it on the table.

Of course Jim didn't mean to do it—oh no.

But the collision upset that bowl of hot soup and out went the soup and fragments of chicken onto that bald head inundating it and splashing over into the whiskers of the ros'beef man opposite.

Jim shied back and the bowl went to the floor with a crash.

Baldy, clapping both hands upon his head bounced to his feet with a yell—and his legs catching in the table cloth, and under the table, overtipped that framework, landing a plate of butter in the lap of Whiskers and a pot of mustard.

The landlord rushed up and the waiter followed suit.

"Soak his head in ice water."

"Rub it with catsup!"

"Arnica!"

"Shave it!"

"Take all his hair off!"

These were the festive remarks of the customers by way of consolation for the red gentleman who was dancing around and howling for vengeance.

Jim looked on at this nice little racket shaking his sides over the fun.

"The old fool'd kept his head still, it wouldn't have happened," growled Whiskers.

"Bumped his head agin' the bowl!" explained Jim.

At last the old gentleman quieted down, and the landlord repaired the damages by tendering them a free dinner as a solace and satisfaction to the victims of misplaced soup and butter.

"Baggy, it comes out of your wages," said the landlord.

"But, sir, I—I—"

"Never mind your eyes. You'll pay for it, that's flat."

Baggy gave Jim a ferocious glance of vengeance.

And Jim, the rest of the day, was set to work in the kitchen cleaning knives.

#### CHAPTER IX.

"You ain't cleanin' them knives right—you're a spilin' 'em, you ijit!"

This was what Baggy said to Jim.

Jim had his own ideas of knife cleaning, or rather Jim saw a small modicum of fun in putting them in a bath of vinegar and soap.

"Wat air you doin', anyhow?" said Baggy.

"Don't you see, old feller, wat I'm a doin'?"

"You're a ruinin' them knives and forks."

"Who says so?"

"I do."

"Well, what you say ain't no good no way."

"I'll fire you out of here if you give me any of your tip."

"Take a bigger gun than you to fire me out."

"Wat's that?"

"Nuthin' but a little waddin' fer your powder."

"I didn't exzactly ketch your meaning—couldn't you jest kinder say it over agin'?"

"Wait, old puddin', till I get this job done."

"Jest stop where you air now. Drop 'em."

"D'y'e mean it old feller?" said Jim.

"Yes, just drop 'em where you air. Them's my words."

Jim did drop them.

He quietly let the whole pile of knives and forks drop from the board and his hands to the floor.

They fell with a rattle and crash which startled the whole kitchen and so frightened one of the cooks, a nervous nigger that he let fall a frying pan full of hot grease and a dozen or two of sausage plump into the fire.

The fat blazed up, and for the time it looked as if the whole entire place was on fire.

The kitchen was filled with the smoke and it rolled out into the saloon.

"Threw water onto it," cried Baggy.

One of the dishwashers thereupon immediately dashed a big pan of soapy dishwater on the red hot range, and that settled it.

It sent out a shower of ashes like a young Vesuvius in the wildest sort of an eruption.

Jim danced with delight.

The "boss" rushed in to find out the cause of the excitement.

"It's that blasted Jim!" roared the exasperated Baggy.

"Tain't," yelled Jim, "it's cos the fat's all in the fire!"

Through the smoke and the smell the boss made a dash at Jim in order to give him a kick.

Jim dodged behind Baggy just in time for the latter to catch the full weight of the leather elevator, and Baggy uttered a howl of pain.

"Where is he?" shouted the landlord.

"Knock 'im down with a flat iron!"

"Punch him with a dough tray!"

"Swat 'im with the dish cloth!"

Jim waltzed out through the door leading into the saloon, and ran against one of the waiters, who was coming in with a load of empty dishes.

Down went the dishes—smash.

And down among them went the waiter, spread out like a bat nailed to a barn door.

"Catch 'im!"

But they didn't catch him.

Jim bolted down between the long row of tables and gained the street, before any of the crowd could count six.

As soon as he was out of sight around the corner, he stopped and looked round.

He had that fun all to himself.

"Wasn't that a bustin' old racket. Oh no, may be it wasn't. I don't guess I'll try the eatin' house bizness agin'. It don't seem to suit my complexion, an' I'm derned sure it didn't suit any of them fellows. My eye, didn't old Baggy bounce when the boss gim him that air hoofin'?"

Finally Jim quieted down, and went on his way rejoicing.

"I wonder what'll be the next thing I'll tumble into?" he said to himself, as he wandered up the Bowery.

He looked into the shop windows as he went along, and kept an eye open for all the chances.

When he got up as far as Great Jones Street he caught sight of a pasteboard sign in the window of a shoe store.

It read, in very wild-looking letters of marking-brush sort:

"Boy wanted."

"Boy wanted," said Jim; "I'm a boy and I'm wanted. I'm the feller for that paper."

In he pirouette, looking as lamb-like and innocent as if he were the mildest sort of an angel without wings.

"Pair of shoes?" said a lanky chap, who came forward.

"Near-sighted feller, that," said Jim; "takes me for a pair of Number Nines."

"Pair of shoes?" repeated the lanky one.

"No, I thankee," said Jim, "I'm the boy."

"What boy?"

"That's wanted," answered Jim.

"Dunno whether you are or not—go back to Mr. McGingam the boss."

"Yes, sir," said Jim.

Jim found the boss at the backend of the store sitting on a box trying to freshen up a pair of shop worn shoes by scraping the soles with a piece of glass.

He looked up at Jim.

"Well what dy'e want bub?" he asked good naturedly.

"I want to know if I'm wanted, sir."

"Eh—wanted?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh—yo—I see," said the boss.

"He isn't blind, that's one comfort," said Jim.

"You saw that sign in the window?"

"Didn't need any specs to see it, neither," said Jim grinning.

"Were you ever in a shoe store?"

"How'd I git my foot leather ef I hadn't been?"

"I mean did you ever tend one?"

"No, sir."

"Ah."

"But I think I could if the weather didn't work again me," added Jim.

"Well," said the boss, taking up another shoe and a fresh piece of glass, "we want a boy to fly around lively, to dust the shelves, put the stock back in the boxes when the salesmen are busy, and run of errands."

"Yes sir."

"Think you would answer?"

"Just ask me, that's all."

"Where'd you work last?"

"Into a dining saloon."

"What'd you quit it for?"

"Cause the boss was a sort of noisy, and the waiters didn't sort of like me, sir."

"Umph!"

"Yes, sir."

The boss of the store looked at Jim sharply.

Jim stood first on one foot and then on the other.

"Got any references?"

"Any what?"

"References?"

"Never had any, sir."

"I'm afraid you won't do, bub."

"How do you know I won't?"

"I want a boy that has references."

"Well, s'posin' I refer you to Mr. Vanderbilt."

"Eh?"

"Er to Astor."

"Wat?"

"Er if they ain't toney enough, Judge of the Supreme Court."

"Can you refer me to those people?"

"Of course. You can ask 'em 'bout me any time you like," Jim grinned as he got off this speech.

"I kin refer you to most anybody."

"All right, but when can you begin?"

"I kin begin next week, but I'd rather begin now."

"Well, it's two dollars a week, from six in the morning till eight at night—Sundays off—no pay for holidays."

"Yes, sir."

"Take off your hat and my head salesman will show you what to do. What's your name?"

"Jim."

"James, eh?"

"No, sir, not James A. Only Jim."

"Mr. Heeltop?"

The lanky chap came up.

"Heeltop, take this boy and show him what to do. I've hired him."

The lanky salesman took him to the front part of the store.

"You must dust off the shelves every once in a while, keep an eye on the front door, and learn to wait on customers."

"Yes, sir," said Jim. "Anything else?"

"Oh, yes," said Lanky, "help around generally."

"Won't be much loafin' time with them?"

"Not if I know it," was the answer.

At that moment a lady entered. Lanky said to Jim,

"See what she wants."

"Yes, sir." Jim went toward the door. "What'll you have, mam?"

"Have you any balmorals?"

"No, mam," promptly answered Jim. "We keep nothing but shoes."

"You're a fool," said the woman, and she brushed past Jim.

"There's a pair of us, as the mule said to his ear."

"I want a pair of balmorals," the woman said to Lanky.

"Yes'm—What size?"

"Twos."

"Take a seat, ma'am." Lanky hustled about an instant, and then yelled for Jim.

"Boy!"

"Yes, sir."

"Look out for the door."

"There ain't nobody takin' it away yet, sir," said Jim. A man came in. "What'll you have?" said Jim.

"Want a pair of shoes."

"Step in—take a seat," said Jim, imitating the lanky salesman's style.

"What size?"

gathered up a stool and flung it just in time to strike both of them in the back.

"I'll show—you—how—to—sell—old—shoes—you—you—scoundrel," puffed the man, getting his fingers into Lanky's hair.

"You're—you're a lunatic!" wheezed the clerk, writhing and twisting and squirming with his foe, in such a comical manner, like a circus clown pretending to have the colic, that Jim, who as usual was standing near the door, laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"D'ye, hear me, you boy—git a policeman!"

"Yes, sir,"—said Jim, but never stirring a step.

When the row was at its height, the swell who a little while before had bought the slippers came in.

He was as red in the face as a turkey gobbler's comb.

He had that wretched old umbrella in one hand and the cover dangling in the other.

"You—here—where's my own umbrella?" he shouted.

"What next," cried the boss. "You don't mean to say we sold you an umbrella?"

"No—but—I bought a pair of slippers, and laid my new silk umbrella, in its case, on that shelf—and—and—look at this."

He hoisted the one he had in his hand.

It was an awful-looking wreck of an umbrella.

A broken lot of ribs, a mere skeleton—was all there was.

"We'll take the whole gang of you in," said the policeman.

"Take 'em in," roared the crowd, anxious for the fun.

"But—let me explain."

"You see that wild wretch—"

"That miserable idiot."

"Swindling job!"

"Look at this umbrella, for a silk one!"

"Them shoes!"

The swell got so excited that he dropped his umbrella cover.

Jim picked it up.

While they were wrangling with the officers and each other, Jim took the cover, slipped behind the door and put it over the man's own umbrella.

Then grinning, he brought it out and held it up to the boss.

"Say, boss, here's a 'rella I found behind the door—maybe this is the gen'lman's!"

"Hey—what?"

The owner made a dive for it.

"Ah, ha!" he said, when he examined it. "Ah ha. That's it—that old villain—when he found it wouldn't work to keep it, he gives it up."

Finally after all sorts of talk back and forth and funny explanations the policemen went out about their

The customer got up and walked back and forward stamped his feet into the boots.

"Guess it wasn't anything," said the customer, stamping his foot.

"Will you wear 'em away with you?" asked Lanky.

"No; I'll take 'em off, and you can send 'em around to the house."

Then he tried to get them off. He pulled and twisted and jerked.

No go."

Then Lanky got hold, braced himself, and went in for a steady pull.

But it was no use.

Then he braced himself back again and gave a tremendous pull.

He fetched the boot off and tumbled over backwards with his head in a shoe box.

When that boot came off it took the stocking with it and a small sample of the skin.

"Thunder and Jehosephat!" he bawled.

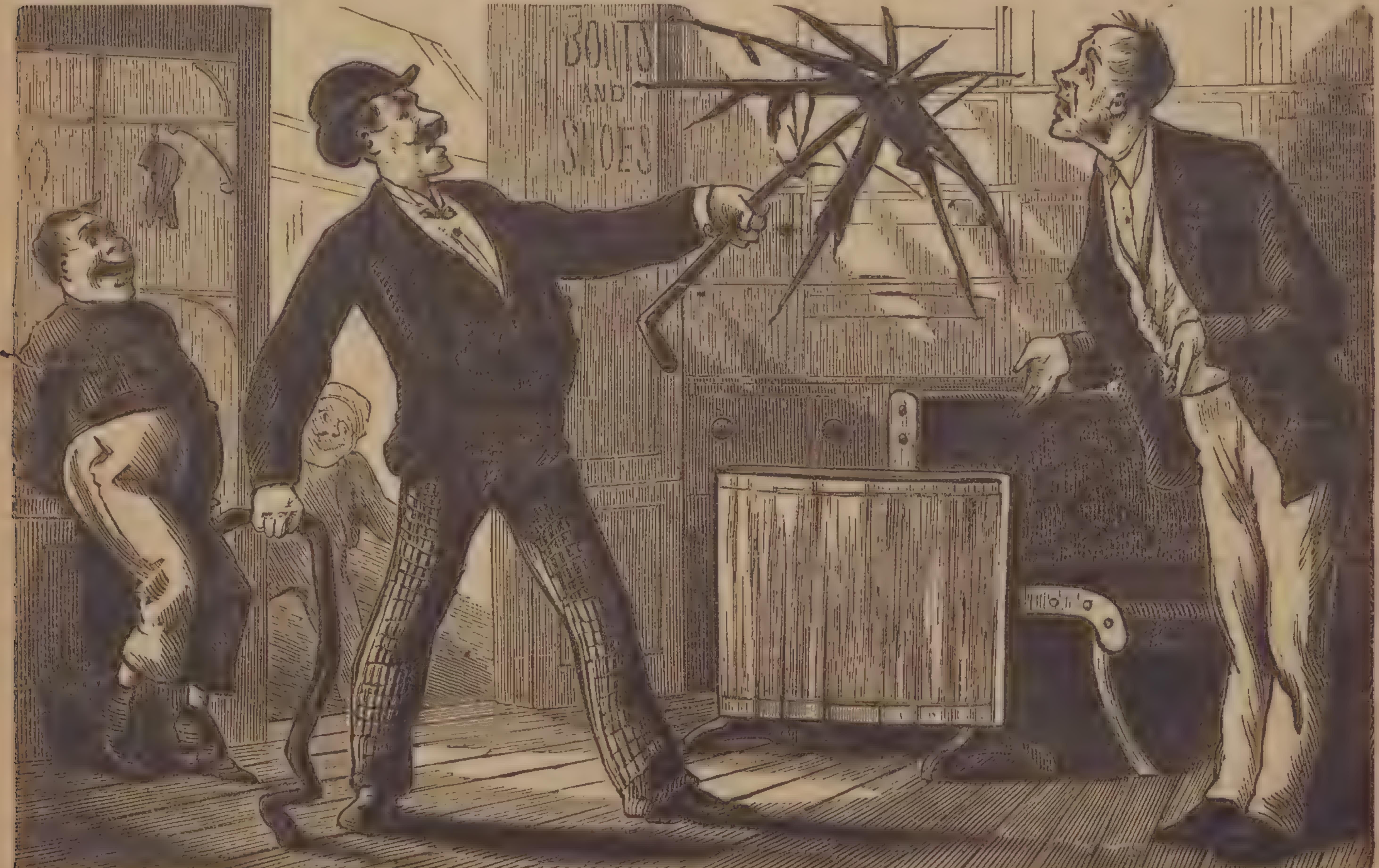
"Wax! by the blazes!" exclaimed Lanky, as he picked himself up and examined the boot.

Jim grinned.

The other boot was worked off at last, and only brought some of the stock with it.

"You don't suppose I want them boots, do you? You kin keep 'em."

"But—"



"I bought a pair of slippers," said the man, "and laid my new silk umbrella in its case on that shelf—and—and—look at this."

Jim laid down on a box and roared.

"Wot a numbrella," he said, to himself.

"Old shoes and busted umbrellas!" said the boss. Meanwhile, Lanky and the old shoe customer had separated, and were shaking their fists at each other, and calling hard names.

A small-sized crowd had collected at the door, and was staring in, anxious to find out what the row was about.

"It's nothin', only two fellers as has taken a umbrella and a pair of shoes that wasn't theirs," said Jim, to some of the anxious ones.

Then the report went around.

"Two shoplifters caught at it!"

"Where's the police?"

"Git the police."

"Town's chock full of thieves—lots of stores robbed every day!"

"Bill, run around the corner and ketch a cop."

"Jim," cried the boss of the beleaguered store, "come away from that door."

"Yes, sir—but the crowd—"

"Blast the crowd," said the boss.

The old shoe man and Lanky were still at it hot and heavy, and there were symptoms of another fight, when in rushed two policemen.

"Which is the brats?"

"Them two l!" said Jim with great alacrity, pointing to the umbrella man and the old shoe chap.

"That's one and that's the other scoundrel," cried the old shoe customer, pointing out the boss and Lanky.

business and the two wild customers went away, the old shoe man getting a new pair.

Jim this time worked his little game so nicely that he wasn't suspected of being the mainspring that set the row in motion.

Jim rested on his fun the balance of the day.

The fun didn't pan out and customers were scarce.

Jim lounged around the front door, and occasionally held a confab with the lanky salesman.

In the back part of the shop Jim found three or four broad flat pieces of shoemaker's wax.

It was dreadfully sticky.

He laughed to himself.

Then he lounged out toward the front of the store.

A man came in, evidently an old customer, for Lanky knew him.

"Got those boots done?" he said.

"Yes," said Lanky; "won't you sit down and try them on?"

"Don't care if I do," was the customer's answer.

"Say, boy," said Lanky to Jim, "git that new pair of boots off the back shelf—there, and bring them here."

"Yes, sir."

Jim brought the boots, but before he reached Lanky with them he had inserted in each one of them a thin piece of the shoemaker's wax.

The customer sat down, took off his own, and put on the new ones.

"Feels as though there was a lump into one of 'em."

"No—can't be. Get up and stand on them a few minutes," said Lanky.

"Keep 'em."

"But we can get that wax out."

"Not for me; not for a cent's worth."

And that customer worried on his old boots and went out full of wrath, and left Lanky disgusted.

#### CHAPTER X.

"If this here shoe bizness dusn't jist bang everythin', I'm a sinner," said Jim, after the place became quiet; "but I'm kinder gittin' the idea that I wasn't born for the trade. The shoe trade don't fit me. There ain't no fun into it, an' a bizness that isn't got any fun into it is no good for a young man that wants to get on in life."

"Bub," cried the boss from the back end of the store.

"Yes, sir," said Jim.

"Don't stand there yes, siring. Come here."

"Yes, sir," repeated Jim, who had just succeeded in stuffing two pair of list slippers into the feet of a pair of cavalry boots.

Jim ambled back to the boy.

"Bub, I've come to the cor—asion I don't want you any longer. You won't do."

"Yes, sir," said Jim with a grin.

"You can get your hat and go."

"Yes, sir."

"Before you go you can pick out a pair of nice cheap shoes for yourself. You need 'em bad enough."

"Patent leathers, eh?" said Jim very innocently.

"Patent what? No, sir. Split leather's good enough for you. Beggars shouldn't be choosers."

"I ain't a beggar and I ain't a choosin'."

"Then don't growl at what you git."

"I ain't growlin' at what I git, it's what a feller don't git that he growls over."

"There, that'll do, go pick out the shoes, put 'em on and go."

"Couldn't give a feller a recommend, could you?"

"A what?"

"A recommend, sir," grinned Jim.

"No, I won't. You've only been here two days."

"Yes, sir," said Jim. "All right. I guess, boss, I won't drop dead on the street cos I ain't got it. Kin I waltz now?"

"Waltz. I don't know whether you can dance or not, an' I don't care. You can go."

"That's it—go's the word. Thankee. I'll send you a letter when—"

"Go—get away."

"Skip?"

"Yes—skip at once."

"Split-leather shoes, eh?" said Jim, as he went to the front of the store to the clerk. "I'd like to see myself insultin' my feet with sich sort of leather as that. I'll be split if I do."

"Well," said the clerk, "young two-and-eightpence, what's up now?"

"Nothin', only the boss says I'm to have a pair of shoes."

"Boss says so?"

"You bet."

"A pair of shoes, eh?"

"Of course. You don't s'pose I want only one shoe, do you? What air you atakin' me for?"

"All right," said the clerk.

He reached up to a string of shoes and took off a pair.

"Here, try these."

Jim looked at them.

"Splits?"

"No. Their doe-skin."

"Doughhead! Them's no use."

"Wat'll you have, then?"

"Congress gaiters with a oxford tie and balmoral heels."

The clerk grinned.

"Hasn't that boy gone yet?" bawled the boss from the back end of the store:

"No—he's a going though," answered Jim.

Jim finally selected a pair of "hoof warmers" as he called them, and wrapping them up in an old newspaper, departed from the shoe store.

Going out he met an old woman coming in.

"What'er yer lookin' for, mam?" said Jim.

"I want to git a pair of ingy rubbers fer my old man."

"Mam, don't go in there. Dy'e see that feller in there that's lookin' out at us now?"

"Of course I sees him, an' a nice obligin' feller he looks to be."

"Ma'am, I'm jist goin' for the doctor for him."

"Sakes alive!"

"Yes, ma'am," said Jim.

"What's the matter with him?"

"He's got it. One of the fits'll be onto him in less'n two minutes."

"Got it—what's the poor fellow got?"

The old woman began to shiver.

Jim whispered to her.

"He had the small pox an' didn't do nothin' for it, an' its turned inter hyd-r-hibby."

"L'rl a-massy-Moses—on me! What on earth—well, I do declare I'll—".

"Look out, ma'am—see, he's a comin' to the door."

Jim got away, leaving the old woman standing there.

"If that old woman gits over that skeer inside of a week, I'll eat her ears," laughed Jim.

Directly he looked back.

The old woman was rushing across the street as if a legion of wild animals was after her.

The clerks was looking towards him, and shaking his fists wildly.

"That means me," said Jim. "She's told him.. He's got mad and skeert her off, an' he'd like to punch my head. Mebbe he will an' mebbe he won't."

Jim wandered on up the Bowery a few blocks, and then turned off into one of the cross streets.

"Wonder 'f I'll drop into a job to-day," he said to himself. "I'm agittin' sort of hungry agin. By jinks, I'll sell these shoes if nothin' turns up."

On he went, looking into the windows of the shops and halting here and there until he turned into Sixth Avenue.

He pulled up in front of an undertaker's store.

There was a placard in the window.

"Wanted—a boy, apply within."

"Apply within," said Jim. "Well, considerin' it's stuck into a coffin I s'pose they wants the boy in the coffin. Now this had ought to be a easy sort of place. They don't seem to be havin' a rush of bizness. I'll skirmish in."

In he went.

Both sides of the store were lined with sample coffins in glass cases.

There were all kinds, from the high-toned casket down to the plebian pine stained to imitate no kind of wood that ever existed.

Jim sailed in and boldly faced the music.

There was nobody in the front shop.

But when he had reached the centre of the shop a white faced man in a white choker and in his shirt sleeves came out from behind a pile of coffins.

"Well, Bub," said the man.

"Yes, I'm well," said Jim.

"Oh! yes—ha!" said the man, drawing out his face until he looked as if he had just lost his whole entire family. "You're from Jones', eh? Is he dead?"

"No, I hain't from Jones'. I seen that air notice in to the window—"

"Ah—you want the place?"

"Yes, if the place wants me."

"Smart boy, but you look rather jolly for an undertaker's boy."

"I ain't jolly. Never was jolly in my life," said Jim, with a grin.

"What wages do you want?"

"All I kin git."

"Two dollars a week?"

"Well, as I ain't a boardin' at the Fifth Avenue this week, I might git through on two dollars."

"I'll give you a trial for a week. Where'd you work last?"

"Shoe store, sir," said Jim.

"What'd you leave it for?"

"Well, I couldn't bring it with me, could I?"

"Discharged, I suppose?"

"Fired out? No, sir. I went off accidentally."

"Come back here, bub. What's your name?"

"Jim."

"Your other name?"

"Jams."

"Eh? Good gracious! Jim Jams?"

"Yes, sir."

"I've buried seventeen men that died of that name inside of three months."

"They wasn't no relations of mine," said Jim.

"Mine all died for want of breath 'cept one, an' he had more'n he could git along with."

"What'd he die of?"

"Wind colic," said Jim.

"You're a joker, bub. See here, Jim, come back here, take off your hat, and to-day you can keep watch of the front shop. To-morrow I'll let you begin on coffins."

"Yes, sir."

"My assistant'll be here by-and-by, and he'll show you what to do till I get back. He's out measuring a couple of jobs—a sudden and a hang on."

"What's them?"

The undertaker laughed.

"A sudden's when a man dies without being sick—a hang on's a consumptive."

Ten minutes after this the undertaker went out, leaving Jim alone in the shop.

"This is a nice place for a skeery young feller to sleep in and dream of spooks," said Jim.

He went into the back room.

There were three or four coffins on tressels, and half a dozen more standing together in one corner of the room.

There were a desk and two or three chairs, a lot of tools, and a work bench.

An idea suddenly appeared to Jim's mind.

"Wouldn't it histe him though. That air assistant don't know I'm here."

Jim lifted the lids of one of the two coffins in the tressels.

It was empty; the other was fastened down.

Just as he had lifted the lid he heard some one in the front store.

Jim got into the empty coffin and pulled the lid over him lay there quietly waiting for results.

He heard two persons.

"Hello—nobody here—strange, the old man should go off and leave the shop alone," said one.

"Oh he's not far off—and he knew I'd be back soon. That 'Sudden,' was so drawn up I couldn't git his measure till I straightened him out."

"That's the assistant," said Jim to himself, "and I guess he'll see a sudden dreckly that'll start his boots."

"There's two on the tressels. Bob."

"Yes, one's empty and the other's got a body in it."

The undertaker's assistant and his companion were standing between the two coffins.

"Look at the inside of this case. It's bully," said the assistant.

Solid rosewood, silver mounted, patent handles, and lined with extra satin and lace trimmings."

Then he took hold of the lid.

"Just take a look inside. I tell you the old man's some on trimmings."

He lifted the lid.

And up rose Jim, with his face awfully twisted one eye shut and the other staring like a glass marble.

"Oh, Lord!" yelled the assistant's friend.

"O-o-h!" roared the assistant, jumping back at sight of the apparition.

As in his fright he jumped back, he came bolt against his dumbfounded friend.

Then both of them, losing their balance, tumbled back against the other coffin, and over it went to the floor with a loud crash, and the pair of them on top of it.

"Murder!"

"Murder!"

Both roared in a breath, as they scrambled up from the fallen case.

Jim still sat upright in the coffin, with his face more frightfully twisted than before.

One glimpse more at him, and the assistant and his friend now completely obfuscated by the sight made a wild rush for the door, followed by a loud and unearthly groan from Jim.

Pell-mell they went out of the door just as at the same instant, the undertaker accompanied by a weeping lady in black reached it.

The result was a direful collision.

Over went the weeping lady with a loud scream one way, and over went the undertaker, staggering the other way.

The assistant and his friend bolted straight ahead into the street.

The undertaker whirled around and brought up against one of the glass cases, which gave way with a crash.

The woman screamed murder, fire, police and every thing she could in her fright think of.

Jim quietly stepped out of the coffin, put on the lid and went out to help pick up the wounded and slain of the skirmish.

The undertaker was gathering himself up and shaking loose from the broken glass.

Jim ran, full of laughter, to the lady in black and in a moment had helped her to a standing position.

"I say, boy," spluttered the undertaker, "what's been going on in there?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing—why—you—I—what made my assistant rush out in that diabolical way for, as if the house was on fire or he had seen a ghost."

"Yes, sir, I spect he thought he seed a ghost," said Jim.

"What were you doing?"

"Nothing, only lookin' at 'em now."

"Oh, dear me—this is publicly awful," said the woman, "little boy, get a brush and brush my dress skirt."

Jim ran in the back room and came out with a floor broom.

"Ugh, you nasty little wretch—don't use that dirty floor brush on my dress."

"Put it back!" cried the undertaker.

"There's a mop in there, ma'am."

"Git out!" said the undertaker. "Mrs. Kerfoode—wait a moment—really this is—"

"No, sir," cried the woman, indignantly, "if my poor dead and gone Kerfoode was alive, I wouldn't be insulted in this mauner."

"Mighty damaged!"

"This second hand as good as new, half price." The latter card he tacked on the case in the window.

"There, if that don't make old coffin-jerker's eyes bulge out, nothin' will."

People passing up and down, noticing the strange signs in the window stopped.

So one by one stopping and wondering, a good sized crowd collected, and presently the more curious came in to see the rest.

In half an hour when that undertaker came back, seeing the crowd he rubbed his hands and smiled.

"Ha, there's a sudden—brought in—I'll bet. It's a brutal job I'll wager."

He elbowed his way through the crowd, and after a desperate struggle succeeded in getting into his shop.

"Here, gentleman—let me pass—what's all this mean?" he puffed. "Where's that boy?"

Jim showed up between the undertaker and the door.

"Here I am, sir."

"Thunder and lightning!" cried the undertaker.

"Call in a policeman. Gentlemen, get out of here!"

For at that moment he saw that the entire crowd was laughing at the contents of the cases.

Then he got a glimpse of "will not fade," and "no trouble to shew goods," and "fashionable and dressy," on a cheap pine coffin.

The undertaker's assistant, Si, came back and reported size and particulars of the "sudden."

The undertaker had taken the cards from the coffins and piled them upon his desk.

"Jim, take those things and chuck 'em in the cellar."

"How do you git into it?"

"That door; don't you see it?"

"Of course I do. Gimme 'em."

Jim took the cards and opened the door.

"It's awful dark down there."

"Yes," was all the answer he got.

He went down the steps slowly.

When his feet touched the floor his eyes were used to the darkness. He could see around him.

It occurred to him as he threw the cards on the floor, that he could get another little quiet racket.

"I kin do it and never sweat a stitch. If I don't skeer 'em it won't be my fault. What's the use of livin' 'thout havin' fun? A feller gits jist as much grub and lodgin' as if he was chuck full of funerals."

He saw a pile of coffins in the corner dimly.

He went over to them and pulling out the lower one from beneath the rest, down came the pile rattle—te—bang with a tremendous crash.

"Hello, what's that?" cried the undertaker above.

"Boy's tumbled over something," said Si.

At that moment immediately after the fall of the coffins Jim set up an unearthly howl.

then he uttered a dismal groan, and was heard no more.

"The boy's killed!" said one of the crowd.

Down rushed the police, four of them with clubs drawn.

The excited neighbors crowded the stairway, and trembling.

The undertaker and Si remained above.

As the police reached the cellar floor, they heard behind the stairs a "ha! ha! ha!" as shrill as the crow of a rooster.

They rushed around.

They found nobody.

They searched that cellar from end to end and found nothing.

"It's a stall!" said one of them.

And then they came up stairs disgusted—just as Jim crept quietly in at the front store door.

## CHAPTER XI.

"Ouch—ah—who are you runnin' into?" and a tall man immediately doubled himself up like an old fashioned dog knife and concussed his bones upon the sidewalk.

A plug hat went sailing into the gutter, a two shilling cane rattled down a cellar grating, and a black valise dropped on the stones like a solid shot.

Jim did it.



He lifted the lid of the coffin, and up rose Jim, with his face twisted, one eye shut, and the other staring like a glass marble.

This made him wild.

He threw up his hands and bawled, and tried to push the crowd out.

The wilder he got and the more he entreated them to go out, the more they laughed.

"The man's crazy."

"He's drunk."

"Nobody but a crazy man would put up such a sight."

At length a policeman came in, he having been found out at an apple stand around the corner by Jim.

The policeman gradually coaxed and poked the crowd out with the soft end of his club.

Jim looked on and said nothing.

"Isn't this just high though," he thought.

"Here, boy," bawled the infuriated undertaker, "who put these infernal old tickets on these coffins?"

"I'll never tell you!"

"What?"

"How d'ye 'spose I know, eh?" said Jim. "I seen a feller do it but he didn't say nothin' 'bout you."

"Would you know him if you were to see him again?"

"I rather think I would," answered Jim. "He was a stout, fat little feller, and I kinder thought he belonged here, fur he went over the shop as if he knewed all about it."

"Ah, now I know—it's that—it's that Boggs, my rival in the next block. I'll sue him for this."

"Yes, sir."

And that ended the talk for that time.

"Murder, police, thieves!"

The undertaker stood aghast.

Si glanced at the undertaker and turned white in the face.

"Oh, oh—help, help!" screamed Jim, this time behind the staircase and beating and battering on the side of it with a stick which he found lying there.

"They're killin' of me."

"Si, run for the police. Theres bin burglars hid down there, they're a beatin' the boy."

Si scud out, glad of the chance of escaping the necessity of going down the cellar.

Then the undertaker at the head of the steps began shouting down at Jim.

Meanwhile, Jim kept up his yelling, and howling, and pounding until the undertaker who didn't dare for the life of him go down, was ready to drop with fright and excitement.

Jim saw that by a little pressure he could push open the little square window back of the stairs, and so get out into an alleyway.

Finding that he could easily get out of it, he was ready to close up his racket at any moment.

Presently he heard a heavy tramping overhead.

"Hold on, bub," shouted the undertaker, "now we'll get you out of it."

Si came in followed by a crowd of policemen and neighbors.

"Where is the row?" asked one.

"That door," cried the excited undertaker.

Jim cried out below: "Oh—oh—I'm killed," and

Jim rushed out of the undertaker's alley so full of a jolly old laugh at the policemen fighting each other among the coffins, that he didn't see anything before him until his head struck a tall man below the waist, and sent him to grass in first-class style.

Jim bounced back about as quickly as if he had had a kick from an overloaded shot gun.

"Oh Lord!" groaned the tall man, slowly picking himself up, one leg after the other and with one hand pressed over the precise spot where Jim's head had found its sudden resting place.

"Wot air you a doin' a gittin' in the way?" answered Jim bracing up.

"You—you—young reprobate!"

"I aint no bait for anybody's fish."

"Why don't you look where you're going?"

"Why didn't you go where you was a lookin'?"

"I've a notion to shake the daylight out of you."

"Jest you shake yourself." Jim danced off out of reach as he made this advisory reply.

"You ruffian—come here and let me get a hold of you!"

"I aint no sample igit, I aint."

"Where's my valise?"

"Dunno sir. There's yer hat--block it while yer waits."

The tall man lifted his plug hat out of the gutter.

It was ornamented with a garnish of mud and water.

"This style hoff-a-dollar—with a chromo"—said Jim.

The tall man looked butcher knives, had an inter-

mission of five minutes for swearing over the hat, and then gathered in his valise.

The tall man had a squint in one eye and a screw in the other, a twistin' his mouth, and a moustache that looked as if it grew out from his nostrils.

A faded black suit concealed his frame work from public view, and a pair of black cotton gloves, with an air hole at the end of each finger, made his hands look like fire shovels in bags.

"Feel better?" asked Jim. "I didn't mean to—deed I didn't," he added, and then cut a double shuffle to show how sorry he was.

"Didn't mean to? That don't help my hat, you vagabone."

"Git a new one," Jim laughed. Something in Jim's jolly look, and his little round, fat form, struck the stranger forcibly.

He smiled and his screw-eye squinted, and his squint-eye screwed out a merry twinkle.

His wrath was gone,

"Bub."

"Yes, sir."

"Can you carry a valise?"

"If I ain't chuck full of piglead, maybe I kin," said Jim.

"This is the valise," said the tall man.

"That'll do to skip a boardin'-house with."

"Will you carry it?"

"You didn't ask me to."

"Don't be impudent, will you."

"Yes, sir."

"What'll you charge?"

"Charge nuthin', slate's broke and C. O. D. Come emmeyditly down's the word."

"You'll get what I choose to give you."

"Ya-as, if I take it."

"Here, shut your mouth and take the valise, and follow me. I'll make it all right."

"Where have I got to carry it, mister?"

"After me of course?"

"Sposin you take a notion to walk off the dock."

"Bub."

"Well, go on, lathy, I'll follow."

"Now mind and keep close to me, dy'er hear?"

"I won't lose sight of you any mor'n I'd lose sight of a liberty pole on a sand hill."

The stranger turned and walked rapidly up the street.

"Don't let it fly open—it isn't locked—lock's broke," the man said.

"Will it bust?" grinned Jim.

Presently the man darted into a beer saloon.

It was a large one filled with tables and chairs on either side, and had a black walnut cashier's desk that looked like a judge's seat.

Behind the counter was the landlord, a little pot-bellied man with a fiery red good natured face. He was sitting down and fast asleep.

"I say, landlord—put this valise where it'll be safe till tomorrow."

"Yah—ein bretzel," said the landlord waking up and going fast asleep again.

"Don't bother him," said the barkeeper, "he vos up late las night und is dired."

"Yah, yah I geeps no shlate," muttered the landlord, and went to sleep once more.

The barkeeper took the valise.

"Bub, do you drink beer?"

"No."

"What—don't like beer?"

"I didn't say I didn't like nuthin—I doesn't drink beer cos I can't get it."

"Oh. Well take a glass, I'll pay for it."

"I say, mister, that isn't a payin' me fur carryin' the valise is it?"

"Drink your beer and here—take this."

He gave Jim a quarter.

Jim "gunned" it, bit it, and bounced it on the floor, then he put it into his pocket.

"That's the fust square quarter I've struck in a week. You're no slouch, boss."

Jim swallowed his beer and then stood on his head with his heels against the counter.

"Boy," said the barkeeper.

"Yes, sir."

"How'd you like to help here for your board. Der boss wants a boy."

"Considerin' that I want a boss, I'm yer mutton."

The barkeeper laughed. "You'll do," he said. Then he shook up the boss and told him.

"Yah, yah, dosh is goot," and then went to sleep again.

The owner of the valise went away, after warning Jim to be "a good boy and look out for number one."

There was a crowd at the tables that evening.

Jim was put to carrying beer to the tables. The barkeeper showed him how to carry six glasses—three in each hand.

Jim skirmished back and forth, lively.

Presently a high-toned individual came in, dressed in "tip top style." There wasn't a wrinkle about him, and his legs were encased in a pair of gorgeously cut lavender pants.

"Bub."

"Yes, sir."

"One beer and three sardines on a plate."

"Want the beer in the plate for the sardines to swim in?"

"No, you fool."

"Call me a fool, eh? well I like that," muttered Jim, as he rushed away to fill the order.

He got the beer and the three sardines on a plate.

Besides this, he had in his small fingers, four other glasses of beer to deliver.

He went first for the swell's table.

"Ah!" said the swell, as he pushed his chair back a little. As he did so his elbow struck Jim's "funny bone."

"Ouch!" cried Jim.

And out of Jim's hand smash, crash went three of the glasses, and splash flew the beer over the swell's lavender pants, all over his white shirt front and into his face!

Jim, in order to keep up the fun, uttered a comical howl, and dropped the other glasses.

"Your infernal blundering idiot!" roared the swell jumping to his feet so suddenly that he kicked his chair over backwards, the back of it barking the shins of a customer, causing him to throw his arm back, upset his beer and strike the man behind him a stern winder on the nose.

"Mine got und himmel!"

"Dunder un blizzien!"

"Der tyfel!"

"Chuck him out!"

"You wretched"—the swell made a grab at Jim with one hand and struck at him with his cane with the other.

Jim dodged the grab—and the blow of the cane.

The cane struck upon the hands of one of the waiters in which were piled a pyramid of foaming glasses.

"Whang!"

"Murder!" roared the waiter, and down went another batch of glasses to the floor.

Jim, in dodging, went up against the waistcoat region of a fat Dutchman, who went over with a roll like a beer keg.

The squelch of his fall made everybody laugh—except the swell.

"Hoorah! here's a circus!" shouted a man at the other end of the saloon.

"More beer!"

"One weis and kimmel!"

"You bet this is a racket!" said Jim to himself, as he saw the lively old row he had started.

"Wonder if some other feller doesn't want ter strike my funny-bone. I'm a waitin' fur him if he does."

The fat Dutchman was trying to get up, and spluttering and swearing in high pretzel English, his round, red face fairly blazing with wrath and beer.

"Go in, old buster."

"Shovel him up!"

"Mein Gott!" roared the Dutchman, "I'm on a dish broken glass. Somepody bick me up qwick!"

"More beer!"

"Save the pieces. Set 'em up agin!"

"Bully for the boy!"

The row woke up the landlord.

"Vosh ish dos—der exercise bolice?" he wheezed, toddling out of the bar.

"Come on, old man!" shouted one of the party.

"Hans!" said the landlord.

"Yah!" answered the barkeeper.

"Put ouet der gash-bipes. I durns the whole party ouet."

Jim pranced around lively.

"It's better'n a big dinner of catfish and waffles," he said to himself. "It's jist bilin'—it is."

The swell, who was the first victim, was desperately rubbing at his coat and pants with a handkerchief.

"Here, you idiot," he yelled at Jim, "get me a brush."

"Git gen'lemans a brush quick," wheezed the landlord, waving his fat arm as frantically as a man can who was half asleep could.

Jim brought from the bar the first brush he saw behind it.

It was a brush used for polishing the stoves.

"Here you air, sir," said Jim, handing the swell the brush.

The swell was so excited and wild that he yanked the brush from Jim's hand and began using it.

The first wipe of the brush settled the lavender pants.

"Good—" cried the swell. "You infernal —! Dammit, the pants are ruined."

The brush had left a broad swathe of black down the leg.

This was the last straw, and a heavy one at that.

He made a wild bolt for Jim.

Jim was equal to this little trouble.

He ran around the tables, the swell after him full tilt.

Jim doubled on him two or three times, laughing all the while.

The crowd pounded their glasses on the tables with delight.

The landlord overcome by the excitement, and trying to stop it sank down into a chair and fell fast asleep.

The barkeeper for lack of something better to do began punching one of the waiters.

Jim dodged about behind one table and in front of another, the swell going for him fiercely.

Suddenly Jim threw a chair over him in front of his exasperated pursuer, and over it the latter tumbled and spread himself out on the floor—flat.

"Poor feller—f hadn't bin for that chair he'd a had me sure!" grinned Jim.

"Pick him up!"

The swell gained his feet himself.

Unfortunately when he fell his nose rubbed in a discarded quid of fine cut, and one hand "lit" upon a burning cigar butt.

He wasn't very pleasant to look at when he got up.

But didn't he fill the smoky air of the place with whole yards of red hot profanity.

And the more he swore the louder the crowd rapped with their glasses, and the more Jim danced and laughed.

"I'll crush that boy," cried the swell.

And then boiling over with wrath, he gathered up his hat and rushed out of the saloon.

"I'll have him arrested in less'n three hours!" were his last words, as he disappeared through the front door.

"You're a corker, bub," said one of the customers.

"A what, sir?"

"A regular young corker."

And out of Jim's hand smash, crash went three of the glasses, and splash flew the beer over the swell's lavender pants, all over his white shirt front and into his face!

Jim, in order to keep up the fun, uttered a comical howl, and dropped the other glasses.

"Say, Puddin'," said another to him, "ain't you ashamed of yourself, to be a breaking things and wastin' good beer as you do?"

"Givin' people stove brushes to clean their pants!"

"You're a nice kid, you are!"

Jim took all this sort of chaff very quietly.

He began business again, waiting on the tables, as if nothing unusual had happened.

The landlord still slept and snored.

The barkeeper hustled about behind the bar giving out beer and making change for the three or four waiters.

Jim was keeping his weather eye open for another chance for fun.

"I only just want another hack at it" he said to himself—"and then I'll be happier than ever."

Presently the tall man with one screw eye and one squint eye and the queer moustache came in.

He had added to his make up a clean paper collar.

Or had turned the old one.

He strode in smiling.

"Ha!" he said, when the screw eye took in Jim.

"You're here, sir."

"Yes." He seated his lanky form upon which loosely hung the faded black suit—at one of the tables at the back.

"Bring me a beer, my cherub!"

"I ain't no cherub," said Jim.

"And

"Let me go," and the tall man made a desperate effort to get away.

At that instant the barkeeper was lifting a keg of fresh beer to the rack in order to tap it.

Just as he lifted it from the floor, the waiter gave the tall man a whirl around, so as to keep between him and the door.

The tall man bumped against the barkeeper with the sprained keg of beer in his hands.

The bump was so strong that the barkeeper lost his hold of the keg, and away it went to the floor with a crash that shook the room as if an earthquake had given it a lift.

By this accident the bung was loosened and came out, and a cataract of beer foamed out, drenching the barkeeper, and the tall man, and everybody within ten feet of the keg.

"Dunder un blitzen!" cried the landlord, bouncing up from his sleep.

"Phew! shew!" sputtered the tall man, whirling around up against the bar.

"Don't let him go!"

"Bung up yer beer!" cried Jim, dancing about on the outskirts of the sea of beer. "Ain't this jolly?"

"Try another tap," suggested a little man, who had just arrived in time to take in the fun.

"Git a schooner and take a sail."

"Wake up, landlord! Somebody's busted yer mate!"

Everybody in the saloon looked on and laughed till their sides ached.

The barkeeper and one of the waiters, one on each side of him, got hold of his arms and tried to lift him.

They gave a tug and out went their feet in the slippery beer, and down they sat beside him.

Then the crowd roared again.

"Git a derrick," said Jim.

"Blow him up!"

"Roll him out of the puddle!"

"Hurrah!" roared the drunken man in the corner.

"Try it again!"

"Rosin yer boots!"

"Git a barrel of ashes!"

The aggravated waiter and barkeeper, after half a dozen slips got upon their feet, and once again took hold of the beer-sogged "boss."

This time they got him partly up.

"Git a wheel-barrow!"

"Steady—now—don't luff—steady young bung-starter!"

"Now, then!" cried Jim, roaring.

It was an awful strain, was that for the barkeeper and waiter.

"Give him a health lift," said Jim.

For a moment that landlord was suspended in doubt.

It was up to his feet or another squelch.

But one of the laughing by-standers put in his

He would have choked his grandmother at that moment had she been in Jim's place.

He made a rush at Jim.

Jim didn't stir an inch until he saw the upraised bung-starter coming down.

Then he opened the door half way and dodged out, and the bung-starter instead of hitting him whanged into the big frosted glass of the door, shattering it into a hundred pieces.

"Hit 'em again!" roared Jim on the outside.

"I'll kill dat poy if he lives a thousand years" cried the barkeeper.

The crowd inside howled. It was the biggest circus they had seen in many a long day.

"Guess they won't want me in a beer saloon again—not much," said Jim, as he turned up the street.

## CHAPTER XII.

Jim was so full of jollity over the result of his lager beer experience, that it is entirely probable he would have attempted climbing a lamp-post, only that he knew the accidental policeman of the precinct might interrupt his little performance.

"I don't want any more saloon in mine," said Jim to himself. "Jeminy, didn't that galoot smash the window. Wanted to hit me, did he? Big thing—but he didn't have it on ice."

Jim, with his hands in his pockets, wandered on up the street.



At that instant down went the valise to the floor. It no sooner struck than bang! came an explosion.

The waiter made a grab to get hold of the tall man again, but his feet slipped from under him on the beer-y, and away he went souse into it.

When he scrambled up, the tall man had made tracks and was gone from his sight.

Then the landlord having awakened, once more tried to waddle around behind the bar.

Jim offered to help him cross the beer pool.

"Yah, yah; I leans on you, un den I doshent shlip me up."

Jim made up his mind that there would be more fun if that fat landlord did try to lean his weight on him. The landlord did.

He placed his puffy, fat hand on Jim's shoulder, and old Jim to hold up "coonder" him.

Just as the landlord had made his second step forward, resting upon Jim, there came trouble.

Jim let his shoulder down and over tumbled the fat landlord splashing upon his broad back into the beer on the floor.

"Ugh, murther, I'm tead, I'm kilt mit tat tam poy!" morted the landlord, scrambling on the floor like a big turtle working its flippers.

"Lift the old beer vat up!"

"Tap him!"

"Roll him over!"

Nobody paid any further attention to the man who said he had been shot.

Nor to anything else except the fat landlord's trou-

ble, and thus assisted the landlord was finally landed in his chair behind the counter.

No sooner was he planted in it than he fell fast asleep.

Then the barkeeper who had been watching Jim turned on him.

"You're a peat?"

"A wat?"

"What for you makes all dese drubbles in dis howes?"

"I hain't done nothin?"

"Vat you calls noding. Git out mit your tam lies. You makes mit the pistol shoot and preaks the glasses und der floor mit your nonshense."

Jim saw a storm brewing.

He was close to the door, so he felt safe.

"Well, 'spomen I did, old limburger?"

"Was is das!"

"Taffy!"

"Dafsy—I kiss you dafsy—" and the barkeeper made a dive for Jim with the bung-starter.

Jim grinned. He wasn't a bit frightened.

He saw a chance for another "drubble" for the barkeeper.

He had hold of the door, and had opened it about an inch.

Then he screwed his face into an exasperatingly comical shape.

"How's that, old beer-slinger for a smoot?"

The barkeeper wanted no more.

He still had the twenty-five cents in his pocket which the man with the screw in one eye and the squint in the other had given him.

He took it out and looked at it.

"That's square—good for beans an' a night's lodgin', if nothin' else turns up. There ain't nothin' like havin' a hefty balance in bank to draw on."

"Bub!"

"Hello," said Jim, turning round. "Who's a bub-bin me now?"

It was a man with a coarse voice, shock head, and a nose set two degrees too far to the starboard of the line of beauty.

"Bub?"

"Well—I'm the bub, I spose."

"What are you lookin' for?"

"I ain't a lookin' for Bill Vanderbilt. You haven't seen him a lookin' for me, have you? He owes me a little matter of a couple of millions 'er less, an' I didn't know but he'd left it with you, an' you was a callin' me in to git it."

"You're high-daddy on smartness, ain't you, bub?"

"I ain't no high-daddy 'er low-daddy—my name's Jim. Jim it was an' Jim it's goin' to be."

"I say, my young snoozer—wouldn't you like a posish?"

"A wat?"

"A posish with a chance of gittin' up into the world."

"Dunno. I never had any posish for lunch."

"You know well enough what I mean."

The man with the coarse voice was standing in the door of a cigar shop.

At the side of the door was a gigantic wooden Turk with a turban which looked like a dessicated round of beef.

The Turk was on wheels, and ever since his creation had been vainly endeavoring to smoke a long stemmed pipe without either fire or tobacco in it.

He had a crack in his painted shoulder—one foot broken short off.

One ear was gone, and there was a long deep fissure in his off knee joint.

"Don't you like that Turk of mine?" said the coarse-voiced man.

"I haint nothing agin him, only I'm a thinking some Rooshian must have bin along here and kinder went for him."

"No, that's the natural wear and tear of the old thing. But see here, bub, you don't look as if you had anything to do. I want a boy."

"Why in thunder don't you git one then?"

"That's what I've bin trying to do."

"Well, I'm your beef tea for that sort of thing; I kin dust off that Turk, turn flip flaps—do anything except spend money."

"Why can't you do that?"

"Cos I hain't got any to get rid of."

"You'd do for me."

"Will I?"

"Yes, come in here."

"Wat'll I come in here for?"

"Till I have a talk with you."

"Hain't we had talk enuff now, my time is wall-

bel an I've got a good lot of it on hand to take care of."

"No nonsense, bub, come in here, and if we agree on terms I'll hire you for my shop boy."

"For yer shop boy—why don't yer shop boy do his own hiring?"

The shock headed man grinned.

He rather liked Jim's blunt sort of impudence.

"Where do you live?"

"Right here, just now, sir. If I wasn't livin' here I'd be a dyin' or dead here, 'er else I'd be somewhere else, boss."

This time the man laughed outright.

"Do you want a place?"

"Yes, a good deal; was there any place wants me?"

"Come in here right along now; I'll give you a place."

"Wot's it worth?"

"What you can earn."

"I'd rather have wot I kin eat."

"You can have that too."

"I mean to have it if it gits inside of my reach."

"You can sleep in the shop."

"Yes, sir."

"Shut up at nine at night."

"All right, boss, I'll sail in."

"On trial, you know."

Trial? Have you got a police court in there?"

"No, you blazin' gump, of course not. You're green, ain't you?"

"Too green to be picked off, boss."

Jim having said this, giving the immovable but battered Turk the benefit of a kick on the shins, followed the man into his cigar store.

There was a sharp-eyed, thin-lipped young man in his shirt sleeves behind the counter.

"That's my clerk."

"Yes, sir," said Jim.

"Bob, I've taken a risk on this boy. I've hired him on trial—in the place of the other one."

"Where's the other one?" asked Jim.

"He's gone!"

"Gone dead?"

"No, he smoked too much—made him so thin that when he fell down he looked like a paper pattern. Customers didn't know whether it was him or his shadow that was a waitin' on 'em. Fact."

"Ya-as it sounds like it—thin."

"Was he a good boy?" asked Jim.

"Oh, yes—very good."

"That's wot I thought—them good boys is a allers gittin' into trouble. Us wicked sellers slip along as easy as a three legged goat over the side of a Yorkville stone heap."

"Now, bub, take off your coat and I'll show you what to do."

Jim did so. He saw two men in the back shop making cigars.

The clerk went out to his lunch. The boss after giving some orders to the workmen went out also, telling Jim if anything was wanted to call one of the men.

"Yes, sir," said Jim.

Jim looked about him for a racket.

"They don't ask me out to lunch. Suppose I ain't good enough," said Jim to himself, as he looked about the shop.

"There ain't no rush of trade here big enuff to set any seller wild. What'll I do I wonder?"

In came a customer.

"Boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Two for a quarter, quick!"

"Two wot?"

"Henry Clays, you fool."

"Kerrect," said Jim. Then an idea struck him. He looked up at a pile of boxes on a shelf.

"There ain't none open—kind you want. If you'll just climb up there an' git that top box, please. I ain't big enough, an' the boss is out."

The customer went behind the counter, and climbing up with one foot on the counter and the other on the lower shelf, reached up.

As he did this Jim skipped to the back shop door and said to one of the men: "There's a man comin' to the shop a takin' down cigars."

The men rushed out at once.

Their imagination at once suggested that the customer was a sneak shop-lifter.

That's what Jim wanted them to believe.

The man had just got his hand on the top box.

"Git down from there, you infernal thief!" bawled one of the men, rushing up and grabbing the man's counter-leg tightly in both hands.

"Come down. We've got you dead sure. Bub, you run and call a policeman."

Jim didn't run.

The customer so suddenly grabbed as a thief made a sudden jerk, his hands clutched at the shelf to save himself from falling, but instead of the shelf he caught hold of one of the lower boxes and down came the whole pile rattle-t-y-bang in a heap on the floor and the counter.

"Let go my leg!" cried the customer.

"Come down!" cried the cigar maker, getting another twist on the victim's leg.

The other workman who got around behind the counter, just in time to be under the shower of falling boxes, and jam his feet into half a dozen of them, in trying to get out of it, made a desperate jerk at the unlucky customer's other leg.

This and the rain of boxes, demoralized him completely.

His wrath was up.

Jim stood back grinning.

"Come down, 'er we'll pull you down."

"Down with you—give up 'er you'll git the worst of it."

The customer not knowing what else to do, kicked out with the foot that was on the shelf.

The inside workman got it in the small of his back, and set up a howl like that of a sick wolf.

The customer made a spring for the floor.

But he didn't do it—exactly.

The man who had hold of his counter leg held on tight. This threw the astonished and wrathful customer off his balance, swung him around, and away he went over sidewise, spread-eagle fashion, on to the counter and head and shoulders into the glass case of cigars and pipes.

"Hoorah!" cried Jim.

"Murder!" cried the wrecked customer, dragging himself up out of the case and dropping off the counter on to the floor.

No sooner was he down than the two workmen went for him.

"Give him two for a quarter," cried Jim, will with delight.

"Now we've got you!" roared the workmen, grabbing the customer by the shoulder.

The customer had had enough of it.

He began to think he had got into a den of raving lunatics.

He turned on his tormentors and gave one after the other, each of them a tremendous flat handed whack over nose and eyes that made them see seventeen million stars in one second.

One of the men went over against the counter, and sat down, smash, into the pile of cigar-boxes, and the other whirled around like a top up against Jim.

Jim dodged one side and let him down easy onto a heap of wet strip-tobacco.

No sooner did the wild customer let out his flat handers than he turned and dashed out for the street.

At the door he met the shock-headed proprietor coming in.

The customer ran bolt into him, and the shock sent the boss up against the solemn wooden Turk with such tremendous force that both went over together, full length on the sidewalk.

The boss uttered a yell of wrath, and the Turk's big head and turban bounced off and rolled into the gutter.

The customer was knocked backwards by the collision and "lit out" limply, stumbled through a paper sign, got tangled up in the frame-work, just in time to be yanked up neck and crop by the two workmen.

Then there was a lively rough and tumble. A crowd had already gathered on the pavement to see the fun. And they shouted:

"Go it, old Rooshin!"

"Shake him up liv-ly."

"Down with the Turk!"

"Go in, old Bushy heel—hit him again!"

"Police—police!"

"Fetch along der cops!"

"Two for a quarter—on the top now—keno!" cried Jim from the doorway.

"What's the matter anyhow?" puffed the boss, picking himself up and looking dismally funny as he glanced from his broken and down-fallen Turk to the men and the customer at the door.

"Let go—who you hittin' anyhow—"

"Give up, er we'll belt the whole head off'n you."

"Go it, old Snuffy—give him one on the cut-water."

At last by the combined exertions of the astonished boss and two or three of the crowd the customer and the two workmen were separated.

They stood glaring at each other.

They didn't look so lively as they did when the circus began.

Then the boss had an explanation.

"Well, I didn't say nuthin' wrong," said Jim. "Didn't you tell me to tell them fellers in the back room if anybody came in?"

"He said there was a man a climbin' up for a box of cigars, an' we thought he meant the man was a stealin' you see, and—"

"Shut up. That's enough."

The boss was satisfied.

"This comes of lettin' the clerk go to lunch," he said "and leavin' the shop with a strange boy. Here, you young porpus, git that Turk's head and bring it in here out of the gutter."

"Yes, sir."

Jim cut a pigeon wing in the air with one foot and

shaking his sides over the fun his little trick had made went for the big wooden head.

He found it. It looked as black as if it had been shop-peled off after its owner was hung.

Jim rolled it up on the pavement.

The clerk had come, and he and the boss were surveying the wreck of boxes and glass-cases.

Jim gathered up the head in his arms and brought it in.

As he came in, the clerk, in stepping back, jostled Jim's elbow.

"Another high old chance," thought Jim, and with this idea in his mischief-hatching mind, he dropped that Turk's head then and there, as heavily as he could, without showing that he did it on purpose.

Down it went exactly where he wanted it.

It struck that thin-lipped, sharp-eyed young man on a bunion which he had been nursing on his big toe joint for years.

Then it bumped off under the influence of the involuntary kick he gave it, and bounced against the shins of the much-worried boss, and came to a stop in its mad career among the broken boxes.

The clerk howled and danced about on one foot, and gnashed his teeth, and let out a stream of cuss words with enough dams in it to choke up a dozen North Rivers.

The boss did something in the same line, only he pitched into the clerk for "chuckin'" it at him, and rubbed his poor shins between every sentence.

Exasperated and up to a boiling point, catching sight of Jim, laughing, the clerk went for him—hop-pety hop.

"Cuff the ijit into the middle of next week," roared one of the workmen.

"Bounce him heavy!" cried the other.

The clerk limped lively with his injured bunion after Jim, but he might as well have tried to catch a Jersey mosquito with a mouse-trap, as Jim.

Jim ran around behind the counter, and turned a double cart-wheel on his hands as he flew around.

The flip-flap and cart-wheel circus made the boss, who wasn't much hurt, after all, laugh.

Then the workmen laughed.

This made the clerk wild.

To have his pet bunion mashed, and then be laugh-ed at by the boss was too much vinegar for his tripe.

He chased Jim around the counter, and suddenly Jim dropped in front of him on his

after smashing his pipe off against the edge of the door, and upsetting him on the pavement just in time for the image to come within half an inch of flattening out a passing boy.

The boy was of the fighting sort.

"What ar' yer a doin' of, puppy?" he said.

"Who yer callin' puppy—me 'er the Turk?" said Jim, facing him.

"You I'm a talkin' to—don't yer like it—soy!"

"Dem my grandmother's specks, ef I hain't a notion to warm you?"

"You can't spell able."

"You're another."

"I'll wipe the street with yer."

"Cheese it—you're a blower."

"Am I—take that," and the passing boy made a punch at Jim's nose.

But Jim didn't wait for it to land there.

He grappled in on that passing boy, and in about two minutes and a quarter he had him down alongside of the wooden Turk, and was cuffing the dust out of his hair at a terrible rate.

"Nuff—nuff—phew, choking," gasped the boy.

"Git up an' go home," said Jim. "You ain't no good. You're a duffer, you air."

The passing boy got up and after arranging his toilette by putting on his cap, passed on.

"Don't make any snoots at me, er I'll roll you into the gutter next time," said Jim.

Then the clerk come out and helped Jim lift up the Turk and put him in his place.

"Now sweep out." Jim swept out.

"Now see here, I'm goin' to breakfast," said the clerk. "The hands'll be here at eight. You keep your eye out—I won't be long gone."

Then Jim once more had the store to himself.

Half an hour afterwards the boss came in, then the two workmen.

And then came in, later, three or four customers together.

"Hello, Jack," said the boss to one of them. "Want your cigarettes."

"That's me," said Jack.

"They're all done up for you. Here, bub, hand me that package."

Jim handed him the parcel.

The boss opened it. "Ain't they beauties, the best in the market."

The expression on Jim's face then as the boss said that would have made the fortune of a clown.

Jack took them. "Yes, they do look nice. All Ha—vans?"

"You bet. Try 'em."

"Just what I'm going to do—boys—take one—help yourselves."

Every one of them did help himself.

The boss lit three lighters and handed them to the smokers. Each one put his cigarette between his lips, but he didn't light it.

"Schew!—haa—shew!—da—shew!—"

The first suction they made drew the fine snuff out into their mouths—their throats and on their tongues.

The hachewed—they bent double, and gasped, and the distortion and twisting of their faces for two or three minutes was awful to behold.

One of them, Jack, who got the dry powder further down his throat than the rest, jumped up and down, and gurgled, and spit and sputtered, and gagged and hawked, and then began, as soon as the power of speech came back, to swear, and his voice sounded like the rustling of corn husks.

The boss looked as if he were at his own funeral—he hadn't a word to say.

"You—you—thunder and cawoosh!—blast it—I say this is a nice s-s-h-e-w shov-ooch game to p-play!" said Jack. "That for your shoo-ca-ka-ooch dammit

—that's for your infernal cigarettes!" and as red as the face as a turkey gobbler's comb, he dashed the package of a dozen bundles of cigarettes into the boss's face.

At the instant he did this the clerk came in at the front door and the two workmen rushed out from the back room.

The clerk seeing the boss attacked in this manner, collared Jack and pulled him back.

The two workmen in defense of the boss, grabbed each his man of the other two sufferers.

"Stop, stop!" roared the boss.

"I'll stop 'em!" answered the clerk.

"We'll stop em, boss!" echoed the workmen.

"Let em rip!" cried Jim near the door, kicking up his heels. "It's enough to make the old Turk laugh without his head—darned if it aint."

The boss got around to the front of the counter, but not in time to prevent the clerk from receiving a tremendous clip in the chin that made his teeth rattle, from Jack.

"Gentlemen, I pledge you my word—" began the boss.

"What sort of taffy are you tryin' to give me, anyway?" snarled Jack.

"You don't think—" he began again.

"Don't I? Maybe I don't. It's the last time you get my trade."

"But—"

"Oh, I ain't no gum drop to be melted by that sort of moistenin'. You knowed the infernal things were fixed—you made 'em, didn't you—specially for me?"

"Yes—yes."

"That's all I want to know. How could anybody doctor 'em up with snuff after they was made?"

Back and forward they had it until at last Jack and his friends left, disgusted, and with a tickling in their throats still remaining.

Then one of the workmen told the boss that there was a lot of loose snuff on the bench and one or two broken cigarettes and a piece of wire all of which were set there when they left the night before.

"And that cussed imp of a boy slept in the shop last night," added the clerk.

They all looked toward Jim.

He was at the door.

"Here you—come here!" cried the boss.

Jim didn't hear.

"Come here."

Jim turned around.

"Yes, sir."

"D'yousnuffupthemcigaretteslastnight?"

"I never uses snuff, boss," said Jim with a grin.

"Now I know it was you," and the boss made a rush for him.

But Jim turned a handspring, lit on his feet on the pavement, gave the old Turk a push over, and was out of sight and reach in two minutes.

### CHAPTER XIII.

"Now git off'm them steps."

Jim was sitting on the steps of a dentist's office in Grand Street—being rather tired after his exertions in serving the owner of the wooden Turk.

"Now move, sudden—d'yehear?"

Jim did hear.

Not only did he hear, but after thrusting into his pocket a lime which he had found on the pavement and from which he intended to suck the juice—he looked up at the woman who gave the order to move.

"I ain't doin' nothin' mum!" answered Jim.

"There's my order from the doctor," replied the woman. "He don't want no tramps a sittin' on his office steps. So git up 'er I'll broomstick you!"

Jim only grinned.

"See here!" said the woman raising the broom-handle.

"Well, I do see here. I ain't a seein' anywhere else, am I?"

"You vagabone, git, 'er I'll—"

"No you won't," interrupted Jim. "Ain't these here public steps into the street, say?"

The woman, who was evidently a servant, gave the broom a threatening flourish.

"Go bag your head—sweep yourself out—you das-sent hit nothin'."

"You sassy little loafer."

Up went the broomstick.

"Air you the boss tooth butcher of the shop?"

"Oh, you wretch—I—I'll call the doctor out—he'll fix you."

"I ain't got the tooth ache."

"He'll settle you."

"What'll he charge, old woman?"

This made the woman wild.

She would willingly have given a month's wages for the privilege of knocking Jim into the street under the wheels of a horse car or some other moving vehicular concern that would grind him out of existence.

"You—you—I'll see whether you want more or not," and with a face the color of a new set of rubber gums she bounced into the house.

"Great gal that," said Jim, as he rose to his feet and looked up at the door, and at the glass show case of teeth beside it, and at the great show window beyond it in which were half a dozen full length wax figures, which opened and shut their mouths, and rolled their eyes, and did other natural things in as jerky and unnatural a manner as their machinery could make them.

"Jemeny!" exclaimed Jim; "this here tooth jerker must do a smashin' business. Them wax figgers seems to me want windin' up."

"There he is, doctor, that's him—the misserble vagabone," cried the woman, suddenly appearing at the door, and beside her a yellow faced man with dyed black whiskers, moustache, and hair, gray eyebrows, and about seventeen wrinkles to the square inch of his face.

His nose looked like a swelled wrinkle buried in wrinkles at the top and sunk in moustache at the bottom.

"Here, boy," cried the doctor, "what dy'e want?"

"Most anything, sir," said Jim, with mock politeness.

"What?"

"Nothin' then if that suits you better."

"Take nothing and get off those steps," said the doctor.

"He called you a tooth-butcher," said the woman.

"You did, eh?" cried the yellow-faced doctor.

"I said it," replied Jim. "How'd you git out of that winder?"

"What dy'e mean?"

"If you aint one of them wax figgers out of the winder, I'm durned if I don't think you're its ghost."

The woman's eyes fairly snapped.

"Pitch 'im off the steps!" she exclaimed.

But the doctor didn't take her advice. He smiled and showed a dazzling white set of teeth under his moustache.

"Kerrries his samples with him! most sellers has to kerry 'em in trunks, but you packs yours in yer hash mill," grinned Jim getting down to the bottom of the steps for safety.

The dentist smiled more open mouthed than ever and made an extra show of his teeth.

"Yer needn't open yer shop door any wider," said Jim, "I aint buyin' to-day."

"Boy," said the dentist, "what do you do for a livin'?"

"Eat and sleep—got lots of spare time besides."

"Martha, I've a notion to take this boy in. He's unusually bright, and I want a boy to do odd errands."

"That ragamuffin, ugh! Well do as you like—it's nothin' to me. You'll wake up some fine mornin' and find him and half your tools missin'."

This made Jim mad.

"Old gal," said he, "if I didn't know it'd make you sicker'n a fever hospital, I'd make you eat yer own words."

"Ha, ha," said the doctor, "sharn boy."

The woman whipped out of sight in the passage-way.

"Come in here, boy. How'd you like to work for me?"

"Pluggin' teeth an' jerkin' 'em out with red hot pinchers?"

"No, no. Just for errands and light office work."

"Sweepin' up the old teeth, mornin's, and usin' 'em for to gravel the back yard?"

"Nonsense. Come in here and I'll talk to you."

"None of yer tricks now on a feller," said Jim.

"No, come in here."

In went Jim. The talk was brief and he was hired. The dentist gave him a jacket and pair of pants which had been worn by the boy who did the errands before.

"Sweep out, keep my furnace fire going in my laboratory, dust off the wax figures in the window and wind 'em up every morning, and don't sauce my house-keeper," were the doctor's orders.

The office was a large room, lighted from the front by the big show window, the floor covered with a faded carpet, a few shelves filled with specimen gums, a large table upon which were his instruments ready for use, and at the side a close stove with not much fire in it.

In a few moments the woman came in and said: "Doctor—if you're ready—lunch."

"All right. James, if anyone comes in call me."

"Yes, sir," said Jim, and the doctor disappeared; "he's a queer feller. So's the old 'oman. Wonder what makes her so ugly. Jemeny, what a high old chair!" and Jim surveyed the great dentist's chair in which the patients were seated.

"Hello, here's a customer; a bilin with a double-headed toothache."

There was a shuffling of feet in the hallway, a grunting and mumbling, and in staggered a big, broad-shouldered man, with his hat shoved over on his ears, and an idiotic stare in his eyes.

"Sish barbershop—hic—shay!" mumbled the man.

Then his eye caught sight of the operating chair.

"Shu's—all—hic—right. I wanna shave," and without another word he staggered up to the chair, and tumbled into it, threw his back and his feet up on the table.

"Nowsh all—hic—r—right. Caw mi—air!"

"Isn't he bilin'!" said Jim. "Must be he takes this for a barber shop; wonder he didn't think it was a gin-mill. I'll call the boss."

He called, and up came the dentist.

Before he got into the room the man had gone fast asleep with his mouth wide open.

"I say, boss—poor feller says he was a dyin' with rotten teeth—wants 'em jerked out to wunst—says he had to drink awful lot of whisky and things to kill the pain."

the back of the head, and frightened him so that he dropped limp as a wet rag.

"Go in, old gal," cried Jim; "now's yer chance!"

The man wiped the blood from his face, gave one look at the down-fallen dentist, one at the woman and the wreck of tools and smash of matter around him, and then made a dead bolt for the door.

He gave the woman a push that sent her flying up against a weak-legged stand on which were three or four skulls and jaw-bones, and was gone.

Over tumbled the woman, and the stand, and skulls.

Jim howled with delight and roared.

The dentist in his terror, thinking the man was murdering his old housekeeper, remained upon the floor face downward, and let out a series of dismal groans.

The woman had pluck.

She bounced up, gathered up a skull in one hand, and a jaw-bone in the other, and threw both after the retreating man.

Then she turned her attention to the dentist.

"Git up, don't lay there, the ruffian's gone!"

Assisted by the housekeeper and Jim, who was as weak as a straw from laughing, the dentist gained his feet.

"Oh," he said, "it was a desperate struggle. If you hadn't struck me with that dipper I'd killed him!"

Jim burst out, he couldn't hold in any longer.

"Ha-ha-ho-ho!"

"Shut up, you heartless little heathen," said the woman. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, a grinning like a sick kangaroo at such a time as this."

"Yes, mum!" said Jim.

"Is he gone?" asked the dentist.

"Yes, sir," volunteered Jim, picking up the tooth that had been jerked out of the man's jaw.

"Jerusalem Jewhilliker!" he added "taint no wonder he waked up and trembled; durned ef yer didn't fetch out half a pound of his gum with the roots."

"Here, shut up" said the woman to Jim—"and help git up the table and put things to rights."

Jim took hold and in a few moments order was restored.

"Now," she said to the dentist, "do you come down stairs and fix yourself."

Out they went and Jim was once more alone.

He made an examination of the wax figures in the window.

There were four of them. Two high-toned images dressed in claw hammer coats, and on each side were two female figures with no waists to speak of and immense mouths.

They all had big mouths, which opened and shut as slowly and grimly precise as if they were marking time for a funeral march.

Looking about the room Jim found an old burnt clay pipe in one corner, an old St. Patrick's Day plug hat in the closet and a couple of much-soiled stockings, the feet being in an awfully played-out condition.

"People don't seem to mind them air figgers; they goes right by. I'll make 'em look at 'em."

He opened the inside glass doors.

One of the wax ladies had a dingy white handkerchief which she raised and lowered from her mouth.

In the place of this Jim put the soiled stockings, so that the feet would touch her nose.

On the head of the claw-hammer coated image he set the old plug hat, and in the mouth of the figure of the other man he placed the pipe.

"Now waxys, you're all right. Now I'll wind you up and make things hum."

He found the crank and began winding up the clock-work.

The crowd began to collect outside, gazing at the figures.

It speedily filled the side-walk.

Jim turned away at the crank.

Above the crank-cylinder he saw a mysterious looking iron slide.

"Wat's that fer I wonder?"

He found that it could be pulled out or pushed in. It was a means of regulating the action of the figures, to make them move slower or faster.

Jim pulled it out as far as it would come.

Then the mob gathered in front of the window, howled:

The figures began jerking their arms up and down as if they had St. Vitus dance. They gnashed their teeth, and their jaws snapped open and shut with the ferocity and speed of hungry men at a meal of leather beefsteak.

"Go it, old plug!"

"Shake 'em up, old lady!"

"Shoot the hat!"

"Jerk yer teeth while yer waits fer fifty cents!"

"This style, twenty-five cents?"

"Have a match, old feller!"

"Hurrah for the happy family!"

These and other cries from the crowd outside attracted mere additions to the mob.

Jim stopped turning the crank.

The figures were slinging their arms up and down at a tremendous rate; their glass eyes twitched and rolled as if they were in the agonies of death.

The claw hammer coat figure became awfully demoralized. Presently snap-whang one of his arms flew off and struck the front glass of the window, and the pieces of that glass scattered into the face of the crowd like a shower of buck shot.

That increased the uproar.

The woman with the soiled stockings, not to be out of fashion, began whirling her wax and straw arm around like the arm of a windmill—round and round faster and faster.

Her wax hand with the stockings in it flew off. Then the sawdust flew out of the arm, and then a string of sleeves at the end of an iron rod whirling a circle was all that was left.

Jim lay down on the carpet and rolled over and over, kicked up his heels and yelled with delight.

When the uproar was at its height, and three or four policemen outside had begun clubbing the outskirts of the mob, in order to get into the middle of it themselves, the dentist and his housekeeper came rushing wildly in.

"Cæsar! thunder, what's the matter?" bawled the appalled dentist.

"Oh, doctor, look at the crowd. It's that man's brought 'em here to mob us and tear the house inside out!"

"Hurrah!" yelled the crowd outside.

"Read the riot act!" roared a dozen voices.

"Send for the military!"

"Git the Seventh regiment!"

"Er the Mulligan Guards."

"Hooror for the cops—clubs is trumps!"

The woman cried murder and police.

"Stop your noise!" cried the dentist, "Where's that boy?"

Jim had bounced to his feet, and with his sides aching with laughter, was standing at the other side of the office.

"Here I am, sir."

"What's this mean?"

"Nothin; you told me to wind up the works and fix 'em."

"What?"

"An' I guess I have wound 'em up and fixed 'em!" grinned Jim.

"You miserable imp!" screamed the woman. "I'll tear your hair out!"

The dentist made a maniacal rush to the window.

He took in the situation at a glance.

The way those figures were twitching and jerking to the music of the whirring and rattling of the clock work underneath them was awful.

The dentist didn't see a bit of fun in it.

Nor did the enraged housekeeper.

"Look at that hat—the very one I wore at my poor wife's funeral!" cried the dentist.

"An' them's the stockings too, I s'pose," said Jim under his breath.

"This is an outrage. Boy?"

"Yes, sir," answered Jim, promptly.

"Is this your work?"

"No, sir. That feller came in here."

"What fellow?"

"That ere feller wot fell asleep into the chair, sir. He came in a lookin' fur his old tooth, and cos he couldn't find it he—"

"That's two lies, you reprobate!" put in the dentist, "just now you said—'Hello!'"

Two policemen rushed in.

"Boss," said one of them, "either put up your shutters over that winder er else stop them figgers from jamborein'. 'S fast as we drives away the crowd, up comes more. It's a cussed nuisance!"

"What shall I do?"

"Stop the works!" said the policeman.

"Stop the works!" echoed the woman, "and then take this wretch of a boy."

"Got nothin' to do with the boy. Where is he?"

"There he is," said the woman.

The policeman looked at Jim.

Jim turned a cartwheel, stood on his head, and then jumped up and knocked his heels together three times.

Even the dentist wrathy as he was, couldn't help laughing.

The woman gritted her teeth.

"I ain't takin' in any puddin'-bags to-day," said the policeman. "You fix up that winder."

The officers went out.

In half an hour the window was restored to something like its old condition, but the figures were motionless.

Two patient came in just as the dentist was on the point of discharging Jim.

One of them wanted an upper tooth plugged.

The other, a thin man, had a gloomy suspicion that his entire jaw wanted filling.

He looked as if his entire body needed filling out with something more digestable than teeth.

The dentist seated the first one in the big operating chair, and opened his mouth.

When it was open it looked like the big end of a trombone.

"Bad case," said the dentist boreing into one of the worst snags.

The patient kicked straight out and uttered a yell of pain.

"Oh, oh! don't. That's the wrong tooth!" he cried.

Jim was delighted. So much so, that a festive racket only was necessary to make him as happy as the happiest clam at the height of tides.

He suddenly thought of the lime he had put in his pocket when the woman tackled him on the door steps.

"That's the racket" he said, "I tried once't afore in old Jed's parlor stove."

He skirmished around to the stove.

The doctor was wrestling with a patient in the chair.

The other one was standing with his back to the stove looking at the stand full of skulls and sawbones.

While the doctor was digging away at his howling groaning customer three others came in, one lady and two men.

It was a rush of business all around that day.

"Now is about the time!" said Jim, "for the circus to begin."

He edged up to the door of the stove.

The dentist looked up from his work, and he caught sight of Jim.

"Boy!"

"Yes, sir" said Jim.

"See to that fire."

"Yes, sir."

Jim opened the stove door.

"There's plenty of fire in, sir," answered Jim.

"Then shut the door and close the draft."

"The wat sir?"

"The draft."

"Yes, sir," and Jim did. He closed the draft first.

Then taking the lime from his pocket he quietly threw it into the fire, at once closed the door, and then skipped away to the furthest corner of the room, near the door leading to the passage.

The dentist was hard at work digging into the jaws of his suffering victim.

In a moment more just as he touched the "quick" of the man's snag, with a tremendous report the stove exploded; the sheet iron sides flew out.

"Mercy—murder!"

"Fire—oh! oh!"

The top flew one way, the pipe broke apart and rattled down on the floor, and the air was filled with soot and smoke and coal gas.

The man in the chair bounced up so suddenly that he jabbed his face against the dentist's sharp gum-cutter and cut a small slit in the cheek.

In his wrath at this and his fright at the explosion he turned around and gave the doctor a sounding punch in the eye that sent him sprawling to the floor with his head on a piece of hot stove pipe.

The two women screamed and one or them flopped over on the lounge and fainted.

The other two men ran out into the street yelling fire at the top of their voices.

The old housekeeper rushed in, and added to the roar.

"Po-o-lece!" groaned the doctor picking himself up with his hand over his worsted eye which was swelling up as big as a base ball.

Jim was slightly astonished himself at the force of the explosion.

"Ef a lime 'll do this I'm durned if a lemon wouldn't blow up Hell Gate" he said to himself, "and next time I'll try a couple of 'em."

The cry of fire from two wild-looking men, rushing out of a house in crowded Grand Street, was enough to gather another mob.

And it did.

Not only a mob, but somebody sent a fire alarm signal from the nearest box, and in ten minutes a steam fire engine rattled up to the door, and then there was a time.

The housekeeper and the girl from the basement began throwing buckets of water on the floor.

One bucket full was soused over the lady who fainted, who immediately revived, and rushed shrieking:

"Save me, save me!"

"I know I am. See here, don't you want a sampler down there?"

"A what?"

"A sampler."

"What for?"

"Why, to taste the cakes and things to see if they're OK 'fore they're sent up stairs. Mightn't be baked, you know, and it'd be handy to have a feller to make a sure thing of it."

The baker laughed and shook a pound or two of flour off his shoulders in doing it.

"You dough-slingers waste a heap of flour a washin' your heads into it."

Again the baker laughed and more flour went into the air.

"I say, bub, where do you live when you're awake?"

"What'd you give to know?" answered Jim, seating himself on the cellar door.

"I wouldn't give a three cent piece."

"Then wot'd you ask for?"

"Well, I didn't know but what you might have been in search of work."

"I ain't a lookin' for work as much as I'm kinder gunnin' to git the pay for doin' it."

"You want work."

"Not if I kin git along jist as well without it."

"Oh, lazybones."

"Don't know; hadn't had 'em out to see."

"I kin give you a job."

"What at?"

"So you can learn how to bake bread—night work."

"Yes, I see—bake it at night, and eat it in the day-time."

"If you want a job, come down here. You won't have to beg your bread, anyhow."

"I'll have to earn it, and that's wuss."

"Do you want work?"

"I don't want it, but I guess I'll have to take it, as them temperance fellers takes their gin—for sickness. I'm very sick—I am."

"You don't look sick."

"No, but there's a gohanness in my pocket and stummik that don't come out in my looks. Tain't the sort of sickness that runs to pimples."

The baker grinned good-naturedly, and took Jim by the hand.

"Come down."

"I'm down now."

Jim followed the baker into the cellar.

There were half a dozen or more flour-dipped men at work, and over their heads the gas was burning brightly, while at the far end the ovens stretched across the width of the place, glowed brightly, as now and then the fiery mouths of the furnaces were opened to be fed with fresh bunches of coal.

"It ain't hot nor nothin' down here," said Jim.

"You won't mind it in a day or two."

"No—specially ef I was ter be chucked inter one of them ovens," replied Jim.

The men were working up dough at long benches—tearing off chunks, tossing them into scales, and then firing them away again.

Great pans of cakes were being pushed into the ovens, and equally as big pans of cakes were being pulled out ready baked.

"Now, bub—you take take this pitcher and go 'cross the street there, and git it filled with beer, and tell the man to charge it to me."

"Yes, sir," said Jim taking the pitcher.

"Now be quick."

"Yes, sir."

Jim went to the saloon—the bar-keeper drew the pitcher full of the foaming lager.

"Here, where is the money?"

"Dough hister said you was to charge it to me."

"To you. I don't know you."

"So much the wuss for you and a good many more that's in the same fix."

"You young beat, hand up that pitcher."

"Guess not."

The barkeeper bounced out from behind the counter and grabbed at Jim's jacket.

"Why don't you go fer a feller of yer own size, you ole bungstarter?" cried Jim, dodging the hand, and making for the door.

But the barkeeper was too quick for Jim, and caught him.

"Let go of me!"

"Gimme that pitcher of beer, then."

"I won't; the pitcher ain't mine and the beer isn't for you."

"I'll shake the ears off you!" cried the exasperated barkeeper.

"Will you?"

Jim suddenly broke loose, and turning around threw the pitcher full of beer into the face of the barkeeper.

"Phew! shoe—sh—ugh!" spluttered the barkeeper.

"You infernal sneakin'—" and shaking the beer out of his hair and eyes, he made a fierce rush at Jim.

Jim dashed out, roaring, and ran across the street followed by the barkeeper.

Down into the bake shop dove Jim.

"Hello," cried the baker, "what's up?"

Jim didn't answer just then.

He grabbed up a scoop full of flour from one of the bins, and as the barkeeper came piling down, Jim threw the scoop full of flour over his beer-soaked shirt and head.

"Feller wanted to take the beer away from me," said Jim; "said it was his'n."

The flour was flung into the barkeeper's face so suddenly that the baker hadn't a chance to recognise him.

The baker went for him.

"What're you chasin' that boy down here for?" bawled the baker, catching the unlucky half-blinded and all over mud barkeeper by the throat.

"I—I—he," spluttered the barkeeper.

"He wanted to lick me," said Jim.

"You big brute—a checkin' it down here, too."

The barkeeper swung his arms about like the fans of a windmill,

"Let me go—it's that boy."

"Chuck 'im inter the oven," suggested Jim.

The barkeeper swinging his arm about to get free from the baker, his hand happened to strike one of the bakers square in the face.

This baker had a pan full of pumpkin pies ready for the oven, in his hand.

He whirled about from the effects of the blow, and the big pan dropped from his hands.

His wrath was up.

He grabbed up one of the soft, mushy pies, and smashed it flat in the face of the barkeeper.

"Pie, beer, and flour's a good free lunch," said Jim, jumping up with his feet on one of the benches to see the fun out.

Another baker took a hand in the row.

He gathered up a couple of the pies and threw them at the barkeeper one after the other.

But this time he missed his aim.

One of the pies struck a big fat cat that was calmly surveying the scrimmage from the top of a barrel.

The other mess flattened over the face of the boss's wife, who, hearing the row below, had just descended from the shop to see into it.

"Ach! oh, murder!" screamed the woman, staggering back against the wall with her mouth and eyes filled with pumpkin.

"Fit-me-o-w-fitz," squaled the cat, making a wild bounce from the barrel just in time to light on the woman's shoulders, making her utter a series of ear-deafening yells.

The barkeeper at this instant got free from the baker's clutches, and turning round, bolted up the steps, his speed being materially increased by receiving in the middle of the back the full weight of a big lump of dough which Jim flung after him.

The baker's ran to the help of the boss's wife, and Jim quietly grabbed up the big fat cat in his arms, and in order to keep up the fun, threw him plump into a great tub nearly full of custard, ready mixed for the next batch of pies.

Splash—spit—fitz—scratch—that fat cat floundered about in the custard; the woman yelled, the bakers roared, and Jim turned three or four back handers, and then came to anchor on the end of one of the benches.

Down came the boss baker.

"What der tyful ish der matter mit der tam growd?" he yelled, as he took in the scene.

"Mein Gott, whose is dos in der dub mit de cooester?"

The boss ran wildly over to the tub.

"Den tonsand tyfies, more ash swansy un feneef tollar worth bies gone. Shoot mit der cat; bick her out."

Two of the bakers ran to the tub.

One of them got hold of the tail of the cat, gave it a twist in his hand and pulled the custard-soaked cat out.

"Poys," said the boss, "shust ton't trow ouet that custard, shtrit it up an noppott'll see de hairs in it. I'll serve dat batch of bies to de poardin'-house customers."

His wife had cooled off and was busy digging the pumpkin out of her features, and one of the bakers was scraping it out of her back hair with a chip of kindling.

The baker who had introduced Jim to the cellar yelled out for him:

"Say, you boy."

"Yes, sir," said Jim, jumping down from the end of the bench,

"Come here."

"Yes, sir."

And Jim did come up with his hands in his pockets.

"Now then, how'd this cussed row begin?"

Jim explained in his own way what had happened at the saloon.

"Why, you infernal idiot, I didn't tell you to tell him to charge the beer to you."

"Yes, sir, you did."

"But I say I didn't."

"See here, boss," said Jim, grinning, "didn't you say I was to do just as I was told?"

"Well?"

"Didn't you tell me to tell that air bungstarter over there to charge it to me?"

"No; I said charge it to me."

"That's just it—I said me."

"You half-baked doughhead, I didn't say you."

"Of course you told me to say me, an' if me isn't I, then you can't be me; dy'e see, boss?"

"You—you blast you, go sit down," cried the baker, bewildered.

"I'm crisped if I don't b'lieve that young Satan'd make me believe I'm a cruller or a muffin, if I'd let him talk it out."

It was the boss's wife's turn now to put in her oar.

She made a discovery.

In the grand racket the bakers had dropped their work.

"Sharley, Sharley!" she yelled, at her husband, the boss, "don't you schmell dem gakes an' bies purning in de ovens?"

The men made a rush for the ovens.

The boss stretched his nostrils and "schmelt somethings doo."

He howled out ten yards of Dutch diagonal cuss words, and the perspiration rolled out on his red face.

The oven doors were flung open, the long paddles were run into the ovens, and out came the result.

Every pie was blistered like a bald head night capped with a flyplaster, the cakes looked like burnt corks, and the bread loaves had the appearance of flattened cannon balls.

"Dish ish derribel!" cried the boss.

"Didn't I tell you Sharley wat woot pe te matter 'tese fellers bring in der peer, un git trunk un makes drubbelis mit de schop?"

"Tam der peer!" puffed the boss.

"We haven't had any beer," said the baker.

"Tont lie."

"Whose is doss?" cried the boss, dem fellers say I lie. I dissharge dem efery one tay before to-morrow."

"I say, boss," said the baker, "we haven't had any beer to-night."

He didn't say he had tried to get some.

Jim who had been enjoying the waste of pie and scorch of cake, suddenly uttered a yell.

"Mein Himmell!" cried the boss.

"There it goes!" bawled Jim, pointing to the steps leading up to the street.

"What?"

"Vot goesh ouet?"

"Ach!" screamed the bosse's wife.

"There it goes!" repeated Jim. "That air fat cat."

"F she gits mit de store full of beeples, und covered with coostard, ach!"

The woman rushed up the steps.

Jim when he cried out forgot to mention the trifling circumstance that he had started the cat from its hiding place by suddenly dropping the weight of his foot upon its tail.

The boss swearing harder than seventy witnesses on the wrong side of a divorce case followed his wife.

And Jim and the head baker brought up the rear.

The rest of the force went about their work.

"Hoorah!" cried Jim. "Isn't this high?"

"Shet up, you blazing dough-head."

"I'm dumb as a drum with the head knocked out," said Jim, laughing.

They reached the pavement just as the boss's wife and the boss plunged wildly into the store.

They heard a fearful row inside.

Women screeching and a general shaking up of things.

&lt;p

"Shemeny! Domter flukter!" shouted the boss.

"Och—Himmel!" screamed the woman.

The cat got one dash of it and then, with a wild meow, made a spring from the show-case, out through the front door into the street, where a dozen boys were waiting to chase her down.

The spray splashed over the piles of bread; over heaps of fancy cake and on to the pies, and oh—such a smell!

The boss howled and tore his hair—and then made an insane rush toward the further end of the counter, his wife after him.

"Git ouet mine howas!" he bawled.

The fluid was no more nor less than the commonest quality of coal oil—kerosene.

The boss was upon him, and Jim dropped the nozzle and made a bee line for the door.

The baker flung a ten cent loaf of bread after him.

Jim dodged out and that loaf of bread—hard enough to be a month old—went over Jim's head and whanged on to the nose of a stout Dutchman who was just coming in for his daily bread.

He got it, then and there, but in a way he didn't exactly like.

He puffed in fiercely to the threshold.

He saw the baker throw it, but it banged his nose before he caught a glimpse of Jim.

Jim dodged back in front of the victim, and dived between his legs, as being the readiest way to get clear and out upon the pavement.

The little gymnastic feat didn't work to suit.

The stout customer with one hand on his crushed nose, lost his balance, and stumbling over the doorsteps, he sprawled out on the shop floor uttering a dismal groan.

The baker ran up to him.

"Are you much hurt?"

"Look at mine nose!" whined the stout man as he came up to his feet.

"If I get hold of that boy I'll shove him into the hottest oven in the place. I'll cremate him!" said the baker.

"I'll shue ouet a bolece shustis baper und haf'im in der doombs," said the boss.

"Spitzen bova!" echoed the boss's wife.

And then after a little while they quieted down, and went about to see into the damages.

But didn't they bless Jim.

Jim skipped away, having taken the precaution while in the bake shop below to stuff a hearty meal of crullers and other cakes into his pockets for future use.

"Guess I ain't goin' to sweat much a leavin' the baker's trade. Jemeny, wouldn't I like to see the feller that eat that sir custard after a washin' that fat cat into it—wouldn't I?"

Jim sat down on a door step, and went to work at his crullers and cakes.

It was dark now, and he began to study how and where to find a bed.

He still had his quarter left.

"A fellow must have a place to roost, that's certain," said Jim, as he slowly munched himself outside of the cakes, "an I ain't goin' to hoof it and git pulled in by the cops and sent up next mornin' for a vagrant fer nothin'—not much I ain't—not if I knows it."

He had just put away his last crumb.

"Somethin' er somebody's got to be done," he muttered.

The door behind him at that moment opened.

A thin, tall woman loomed up above him and looked down at him.

Jim rose up:

"Only a restin' myself, mum," he said.

"A restin' yourself," she said, "hain't you got no home to go to?"

"Not just now, mum."

"You're a likely lookin' fellow—jest about old enough, too."

"Fer what, mum?"

"Come in here and let me git a fair look at you?" she said.

Jim followed her through a long passage that smelt of old dinners and seemed filled with the odor of onions.

She led the way up stairs into a dingy parlor, which had an old worn carpet, yellow walls, a few chairs, and a consumptive piano as its chief furniture.

A solitary dismal gas burner lighted the room.

She took a good long look at Jim.

"Well, if you was washed up and combed down, you wouldn't be so bad."

"Yes, mum," said Jim.

"Now, see here; I was just goin' out around into Delancy Street, to see about gitten a boy to do chores and odd things, and help wait on the tables, and black boots and build fires, and sort help around when there's a extra lot of dishes to be washed, and git things at the grocery, and—well, it's all light and easy work."

"Yes, mum," said Jim, thinking to himself. "That isn't much to do; leaves a fellow lots of spare time, doesn't it?"

"Of course it does. As I was a-sayin'—I was goin' to git a boy, and you was a settin' there just as if you'd been sent to me. Would you like to work for me?"

"Wot is it you keep here, mum?" asked Jim.

"I keeps a boardin'-house. I'm not bliged to do it—I've seen better days."

"Orter have held onto a few of 'em," said Jim, to himself. "I don't think she seen 'em long enough to git acquainted with 'em."

"But Mr. Duffer, my husband's sorter sickly, and ain't able to do much, and so we keep a few select boarders."

"Onions," thought Jim.

"Mr. Duffer was once a alderman, and come very near bein' a deputy marshal, only the sheriff was turned out."

"I'll take hold, mum!"

"Wages is one dollar a week and your grub, and you kin sleep in the kitchen. I always have the boy sleep in the kitchen. It's better'n havin' a nasty cat there—for rats is more afear'd of a boy, somehow. Do you snore?"

"Yes, mum, I think I do," grinned Jim.

"That's good. My last boy snored all the rats out of the house, and I do bleve he skeered every cockroach out of the basement."

"Wat time 'm I to git up in the mornin'?" asked Jim.

"Four o'clock'll do."

"Yes'm, I think it will. An' wat time 'm I to go to roost?"

"Eh?"

"Git to bed, mum?"

"That's the way with boys, all they think of is eatin' and sleepin'. Well, boy, you kin go to bed any minnit you like, after the late boarders gits through sendin' for their beer, an' you gits all the boots blacked."

"That's a good lay out, mum."

"A what?"

"Good lay out, kinder keep a fellow up to his work. Well, I guess I'll wrastle with the job."

"Well, you kin git into the kitchen and wait for me." And Jim took the place.

#### CHAPTER XV.

"KINDER strikes me," said Jim, "that that other boy the old woman's talking about didn't go away, but sorter give out. Ef she got as much work outer him as she's a goin' to histe on to me I pities him."

"James!"

"That's the old gal's voice. Wonder if there's any other feller of my name in the house?"

"James!"

Jim sat down on one of the chairs in the room.

"She's er callin' one of her boarders. Nobody ever calls me James."

"Confound the fellow—J-a-m-e-s! Do you hear me?"

"That ere boarder must be deaf," thought Jim.

"If I come after you, you'll hear me, I know. James!"

Still Jim didn't seem to think that "James" meant him.

"Maybe he's afraid she's a-goin' for him on his board bill."

"James," she screamed.

"He is awful deaf—wouldn't hear a cannon bust."

"James, do you hear?"

"Ef she was to ring the dinner-bell, I'll bet she'd fetch him from fust base."

Then he heard her steaming along up stairs.

She fairly made the bannisters rattle in her wrath.

"Jemeny, ain't she bilin'? She's goin' fer that feller bald-headed, whoever he is."

The door was pushed open and into the room she bounced, and braced herself up in front of him.

"You're a-mindin' me, ain't you?"

"You hain't told me to mind anything, mum."

"Haven't I been a callin' you this last half hour?"

"Not that I heerd."

"Didn't you hear me yell James, till I got hoarse?"

"Yes'm, I did hear you shoutin' for that feller."

"Who d'ye mean?" said the landlady, sharp as vinegar, "by that feller?"

"Why James, mum."

"Didnt you tell me your name was James?"

"No, mum."

"W-h-a-t!" yelled the landlady; "do you dare to lie to me?"

"I hain't a lyin', mum. I'm a standin' up."

"Ugh, you little impudent, good for nothin', prevaricatin' imp."

"Mum, I didn't say my name was James—I said it was Jim."

This took the landlady all aback.

She glared at him as if he had been suddenly turned into a ring-tailed blue-nosed gorilla, or some other wild, untamed animal, not usually found in a boarding-house.

"Bless me, did I ever!" she exclaimed. "Sich ignorance I never met before in all my born days."

"Yes, mum," said Jim.

"Don't you know that Jim is short for James?"

"Too short for it, mum."

"Answer my question."

"Nobody ever calls me James. That's what made me think you was a callin' one of the high-toners."

"Well, now remember I shall call you James after this."

"Thankee, mum, James it is."

"Now you can go down to the kitchen and black some of the boots that's in."

"Yes'm. How 'bout them that's not in?"

"Don't be a natural born fit. Come along."

"All right, mum."

Jim went down to the kitchen.

It was close, hot, and filled with the stale odors of codfish, onions and burnt grease.

It was in the back basement.

In the front basement was the dining-room.

Jim found the boots and shoes.

They were muddy, some of them down at the heel, and some in a very respectable condition.

The landlady showed him where to find the blacking brushes.

"When you git up in the morning you must take 'em up an' leave 'em at the room doors."

"Yes, mum."

"After you gits 'em rubbed up, you kin git asleep as quick as you like," said she.

"Yes, mum."

"Be careful of the gas."

"What'll I do with it, mum?"

"Don't waste it, you stupid," and she bounced out of the kitchen.

"This is a healthy place for a feller to snooze in," said Jim, as he sorted out the boots; "but it's better'n the streets anyhow. Maybe I kin make it up in a high old racket as'll make the old gal and her hash-nashers git up and knock their heads together."

In a little while all was still in the house.

Jim having finished the boots and shoes, and feeling sleepy, stretched himself out on the kitchen table. At daybreak he was wide awake.

He raked up the fire in the kitchen stove.

Then he went into the dining-room.

"Derned ef the old woman hasn't locked up everything," said Jim; "wonder if she thinks a feller don't git hungry in the night for suthin' besides dishes. Phew! wat a table cloth."

Jim went back to the kitchen disgusted.

Looking about, he found the butter plates with butter in them.

"Dad blowed if I don't set them hash-eaters wild."

He found a lot of lard in the cupboard.

The lard smelled to him like soap fat.

Jim grinned.

He mixed a portion of this lard with the butter, and arranged it nicely on the plates.

"Crikee!" he exclaimed, "here's a go!"

On the bottom shelf of the cupboard he suddenly caught sight of a rat trap.

In it was a whopping big old veteran of a rat—a regular gray-haired ancient.

It struck Jim that he could make the old victim of misplaced confidence useful.

He felt so jolly over the prospect of coming fun that he went through a sort of war dance around the wire trap.

He gunned around a few moments to see how he could make the rat useful in the way of fun.

"If I could only git him onto the dining table so the fellers'd git a sight of him jest when they got to work a slingin' in their hash, that'd fix 'em."

He saw on the table three or four large

ing and loud and deafening, that the landlady rushed out and jerked the bell from his hands.

"You dratted fool," she exclaimed. "D'y'e want to skeer the neighborhood out'n its seven senses?"

Jim went back into the kitchen.

Presently there was heard up stairs a slamming of doors and a tremendous uproar generally, of swearing and a confusion of voices.

"What ever on earth kin be the matter?"

"Maybe it's fire!" suggested Jim.

"Goodness gracious! it's gettin' wus and wus!" she exclaimed.

"Maybe they've got to fightin'."

Then the stairs creaked, and suddenly a big, tall man rushed into the kitchen, his hair standing up, his eyes glaring, and on the whole looking like an escaped lunatic.

He had one boot on, and the other swinging in his hand.

He was the owner of the water-proofs.

"This is infamous, rascally!" he howled; "look at that boot-woman!"

She did.

"That air boot wus chuck full of lard, squelched all over my foot, and it's ruined my pantaloons' leg, and spiled my drawers. It's shameful, ma'am, shameful."

Down came a chorus of voices from above.

"Where's my shoes?"

"Wrong boots!"

"Thunder and chain lightning! stove polish onto my boots."

"Damn it, I'll leave the house!"

To say the landlady was astonished would be a mild way of putting it.

Jim felt like turning a double flip-flap over the stove.

"Yes, more'n a pound of lard rammed into that boot."

Here was a chance for Jim to save himself, and he took it at that chance.

"That 'counts for it," he said.

"What?" cried the landlady.

"Hey!" said the exasperated boarder giving his boot a whirl as if he were preparing to flatten everybody out with it. "Hey!"

"Why you see, mum, jest after I took the boots up stairs, one of the hash chewers—"

"Boarders, James."

"Yes, mum, come down here and wanted some lard to grease his boots, and I give it to him."

"Oh, ho!" cried the owner of the larded boot.

"Ah, ha!" said the landlady.

"Yes'm," said Jim.

"Would you know him again?" asked the landlady. "Of course I would," said Jim.

"Then you pint him out at breakfast."

"Yes'm."

"I'll punch his head!" vociferated the owner of the boot.

"And he shan't stay here another minit."

"I'll pitch him out. I'll show him what sort of a joker I am!" said the fierce owner of the big boot.

The landlady pacified him, and by this time down came half a dozen of the boarders, all of them red in the face, and looking as if they had had a hard time of it.

"Walk in to breakfast, gentlemen," said the landlady, trying to look as if everything was as it ought to be.

"All very nice, but it's no fun for us."

"It's a diabolical outrage!" said a thin man, with an awful mouth.

"If they'd got that feller's mouth half a inch wider, they'd have had to set his ears back of his neck. Cut a little deeper his head'd have bin off," thought Jim.

"Really, gentlemen, is anything wrong?"

"Wrong!" said the thin man, opening his cavernous mouth; "wrong!"

"It's an insult. Our boots all mixed up and misplaced."

"I s'pect that feller done it, that come down after the lard, mum!"

"I'll lard him. I think it's that young Jinks—he's always up to something that he calls a joke."

"Was it Jinks?" said the boarder.

"I dunno Jinks," said Jim.

The half dozen boarders sat down at the table.

The landlady, assisted by Jim, placed the hash and other food on the table including a plate of hard hot biscuit.

Jim grinned when he saw them go for the butter.

Two female boarders came in and sat down.

One was a big woman with a voice like a sawmill in the back yard, and the other's was one of that treble sort that no one could tell it from the squeak of a new boot.

Just then the man with the larded boot came in looking as savage as a newly-ground meat axe.

They were all seated.

Jim stood behind the landlady.

Each of the boarders went for the hot biscuits, split them open and gave them a load of the butter.

"Coffee, ladies, of course," said the landlady.

"F-please," said the saw-mill voice.

"Certainly," squeaked the pegged-boot voice.

"Sugar, I bleve?" added the landlady, placing her hand upon the cover of the sugar dish.

"Only a little mite."

"One spoonful—no more."

The coffee was poured out hot and smoking.

Then came the catastrophe, or rather *ratastrope*.

She lifted the cover, and out sprang that gray-haired veteran rat upon the table, right in front of those two female boarders.

"Murder!" screamed the treble like a steam whistle.

"Oh—ugh—murder!" shrieked the saw-mill.

"Goodness sakes, help me!" yelled the landlady, dropping the cover on to a cup of hot coffee, upsetting it and its contents all over her own lap.

"The devil!" cried the boarders.

The rat scampered to the end of the table and jumped to the floor.

The women leaped up on the chairs.

Three of the boarders jumped up so suddenly that their legs caught under the table and over went a quarter of section of dirty table-cloth, dishes and hash.

The landlady threw up her hands and fairly howled.

"Hoorar!" shouted Jim, making pretense of "going for" the rat and flinging a plate after it.

The plate didn't strike the floor first.

It "lit" in the breast of the owner of the larded boot.

At that moment the unlucky Jinks came in from the passageway.

"There he is—that's the feller," roared Jim, who never had seen poor Jinks before in the whole course of his life. "That's the chap."

"Ha, wretch, stuff my boot full of lard, will you?" howled the big-mouthed boot owner, making a plunge over the broken dishes at Jinks, who, frightened half out of his wits at the noise and hubbub, stood stock still.

The boot-owner grabbed Jinks, who was a little man, by one shoulder and gave him a tremendous cuff on the off-ear, and then clutching him by the hair, began to wipe him around the floor.

The women standing on the chairs screamed at the top of their voices, and when the savage boarder pitched into poor Jinks, they yelled fire, murder and burglary.

The other boarders not knowing what else to do, went through a series of swearing, and "cuss" words filled the air like dust on a windy day.

"Oh, James—James—go for the police!"

"Don't kill him!"

"Somebody separate 'em!"

"Take 'em apart!"

"Throw a pitcher of water over 'em!" cried Jim.

"James, it's murder! Call the police."

"Better send for the fire department."

"Let me up," gasped Jinks, struggling with the big-mouthed man amid the ruins of the breakfast dishes.

"Look out, 'er he'll swaller you!" put in Jim.

"Police—police!" screamed the landlady.

The tumult and uproar was at its height.

Jim pranced about, and as in duty bound, put in his little help to make it as much worse as he possibly could.

"Maybe it was Jinks that shot that rat up in the sugar dish. A feller that'd pile lard into another feller's boot'd do anythin', mum," suggested Jim.

"Shet up!" screamed the landlady. "Police, police!"

Two of the boarders now grasped Bigmouth, and two others lifted up in a sort of lump the wretched Jinks.

Jinks looked as if he had been mauled by two mobs and then run through a dredging machine.

Bigmouth struggled to get loose from the boarders who held him back.

"Let me at him, he ain't had half enough."

"Hold on to him," gasped the exhausted Jinks, "don't let the maniac loose; there's murder in his eye."

Jinks' coat was slit up the back and his shirt tore out at the bosom, and he shivered and shook like a flag pole in a gale of wind.

"Nobody need hold me; all of you get hold of him!" cried Jinks.

Bigmouth swung his bony hands about like ball bats.

His wrath was up and he wanted to "warm" somebody.

"Put him out!" cried Jinks.

"Who'll put me out? The first man that puts his hand on me'll wish he hadn't."

"Shoot a biscuit at him," cried Jim.

"Be still now," said one of the boarders, who held the wild man, "Jinks will apologize."

"I won't," roared Jinks, "I haven't done anything. Everybody knows I'm a peaceable man. That man is wild with liquor."

"What's that?"

"Says you're drunk," said Jim.

"Ha! let me at him. I'll pulverize the boot-larder," roared Bigmouth.

"Hold onto him," cried Jinks.

"He's got 'em bad," said Jim, laughing all over.

"I hold you responsible for my life," cried Jinks, "if you let that infuriated heathen loose. Hold him till I come back with a policeman."

"Bring six of 'em, coward!" bawled Bigmouth flinging his arms about more wildly than ever.

Jinks rushed out, and the banging of the front door was all that was heard of him.

The two women-boarders got down from the chairs, and the landlady partly recovered her usual temper.

"James, bring in some warm biscuits."

"Yes'm."

The two female-boarders assisted the landlady in fixing the table and putting it back to, as nearly as possible, its original condition.

The men-boarders sat down once more.

The coffee was poured out, and Jim came with a load of the warmed-up bullets which the landlady called biscuits.

The boarders filled them with butter, sipped their coffee and began to eat.

No sooner had they got the taste of that butter in their mouths than an awful expression came upon their faces.

Each one looked as if a long-closed sewer had been suddenly opened under his nostrils, while he was taking a dose of castor oil.

The landlady stared at them.

Each one of those unhappy feeders, simultaneously, spat out his mouthful of butter and biscuit and gave a sickly glare at the rest.

Bigmouth got up from the table.

Then another boarder arose, and with his handkerchief pressed into his mouth, and his nose between his thumb and finger stood glaring at the landlady.

"What on earth is the matter?" cried the landlady.

"Is there anything the matter with the coffee?"

"No, ma'am," said Bigmouth; "it's the butter."

"Soap grease!"

"Ugh—I'm sick!"

"That butter cost me forty cents a pound!"

"Good for cartwheels!"

The landlady took up a plate of the butter.

It looked well enough.

"Smell it!" groaned one of the boarders, who, at that moment was bent double over the back of his chair.

"Taste it!" cried Bigmouth.

"Ugh!"

The landlady did taste it.

And then she looked as if she had been chewing assafedita and raw pork.

"Maybe Jinks did it," said Jim.

Bigmouth started up.

"Darn Jinks," he yelled. "I'll leave this house."

"So will I."

"But you won't take your baggage till you pay your board," cried the landlady.

"Won't we?"

"No you won't." The landlady bounced to her feet.

Her wrath was up now.

"And I believe it's a contrived thing put up among you to git out without paying; great big men like you to swindle a poor lone woman with a sick husband, out of her hard earnings!" And then she got so mad she began a series of boohoos.

hand corkscrew, an' stand on my head with one hipper fur a cent—hey?"

"Non—non—git you off," cried the Italian, in a tone shorter than himself.

"You don't know how to run a circus. I say, where are your organ and monk?"

The Italian got so mad that he opened his mouth too suddenly, dropping his short pipe, let go the crank and made a rush at the tormentor, Jim.

Jim made a dive under the stand, but rising up too soon on the other side, his back struck the edge of the rickety concern, over it went, and the stock in trade of apples, peanuts and other fruitical luxuries rolled out in a mixed-up pile on the pavement.

In his wrath, the Italian made a blind grab at something to throw at Jim, and accidentally burnt his hand on his chestnut roaster.

Then he roared and swore Italian enough to fill a whole opera house with music. Jim meantime had skipped across the street, and was, as a matter of course, beyond reach.

Half a block away when he looked back he saw the short Italian swinging his arms about wildly between two policemen, who, one at each end of the stand, were putting it upon its feet.

"Them cops is good for mackaroni's apples an' peanuts for the next six months," said Jim, as he leisurely enjoyed his banana.

Happening to look up, his eyes caught sight of an old, yellow envelope, posted on the inside of a dirty, old-fashioned window, and bearing in rough letters the words, "Boye Waunted to run errandes."

"Boy wanted, eh? that ain't very good spellin' for a school teacher, but it kinder strikes me that I'm the boy that's wanted into that mill."

He put himself outside the rest of his banana, and then throwing the skin upon the pavement, went up the steps, but stopped for a moment to enjoy the sight of a man who had suddenly sat down on that banana rind, and was gathering himself up by sections.

"If it hadn't bin fur that skin that feller'd never know'd how hard that pavement was."

The man being all up and safely delivered of a general "cussin'" of all people who eat bananas, Jim went into the store.

It was a queer old shop, with an odd-looking counter, a strange medley of shelves and a quaint old three-legged desk at one end, and a work bench covered with little tools and bits of thin boards at the other.

Hanging about the place, and piled in corners, and scattered on the shelves, were all sorts of new as well as of old and worn-out musical instruments. Horns, accordions, bassoons, drums, cymbals, and flutes and fifes were mixed up as if an entire brass and string band had got tight on some festive occasion and thrown them in there.

"Want a boy?" said Jim, looking around.

"Hay?" said a voice—a squeaky voice—"Hay?"

"Not hay—a boy," answered Jim, wondering where the owner of the voice was. "That feller's got the hay fever, I guess."

The owner of the voice came out from behind a huge bass viol. He looked like the ghost of an old violin.

He was old, good-natured, wore big-rimmed, old-fashioned spectacles on his forehead, instead of his eyes, and had a tuned-up appearance generally.

"Want a boy?"

"Ever in this bizness before?"

"No, I don't think I ever got nigher to it than a jewsharp, boss."

"Hey? Never in a musical instrument place before—sure?"

"Nossir."

"Don't know how to play on anything—not even a—a drum?"

"Nossir."

"Ha! then you're the boy I want. All the boys I've had knew how to play, and they kept the whole place in an uproar when I was out."

"Yessir," said Jim.

"You're sure you can't play anything?"

"Nothin' 'cept hop-scotch, muggins, poker, and seven-up."

The old man rubbed his hands and screwed up the wrinkles of his face as if they were strings on a violin.

"You'll do," he said.

"Do what?"

"Take off your hat, my boy—oh, what's your name?"

"Jim."

"Jim what?"

"No, not Jim What; but Jim Jams."

"Well, Jam Jims, all you've got to do here is to sweep out, 'tend shop while I'm out, and run on errands."

"I ain't much on errands, but I'm death on tendin' shops. All right, boss."

"And you shall have two dollars a week."

"Yessir."

"Now, see here," said the old man, as he took out of its case as tenderly as if he were taking a sick child out of its cradle, an old violin with a split up its back and a patch on its face, "this is a Straduarius."

"Jimmie! is it? I thought it was a fiddle."

"It's worth five thousand dollars."

"Old Jed bought a new one for a dollar."

There was an expression of disgust on the old man's face.

"This," he said, taking up another, and patting it gently, "was once owned by the sublime Paganini."

"Wot'd you give him for it?" asked Jim.

"Oh, my boy, he's been dead a hundred years," said the old man, laying the violin softly down.

"Poor Pag—it must have hurt him!"

"And here—here is a genuine Cremona!" This

was in Jim's eyes about the worst old wreck of a fiddle he ever saw.

"A wot?"

"A Cremona!"

"Derned if I don't believe the old feller's off his nut," said Jim to himself; "he has a new name for a fiddle, every time he picks one up."

"Yes—I got a bargain in that."

"It looks as though there wasn't any more left in it."

"I bought it for a hundred dollars!"

"He's gone looney, sure pop," said Jim.

Then the old man took down an instrument that looked like the missing link between a continental fife and the backbone of a mackerel.

"Another bargain," he said, holding it up.

"It looks like it," grinned Jim.

"It's a thousand years old. It's a Jewish pipe."

"Do you ever smoke it?" asked Jim.

"Eh?"

"I've got to make this old looney think I b'lieve him," thought Jim, and then he said, "Wot is it—a briar-wood?"

"The wood is unknown. It's the only one outside the British Museum. Now then, Jim, you mustn't let anybody handle these when I'm out. D'y'e hear?"

"Yessir."

An hour afterward, the old man, after instructing Jim what to do, put on a green old hat that looked like the model of a shot tower, and went out, saying as he did so, "I'll be back in half an hour or an hour."

"If he isn't crazy, then there ain't no crazy people outside of a 'sylum," said Jim.

There was a snare drum on the end of the counter, one of the heads of which lay beside it; under the counter was a great fat wall-eyed maltese cat lying winking and blinking in a broken violin case.

"I wonder if I couldn't put the head into that drum, and put a head onto that old cat at the same time? I 'spose that old looney keeps her fer fiddle strings."

Jim grabbed the cat by the back of the neck, and lifting her up, poked her into the drum and put the head over the drum. Then he put in the cords, pulled down the leather clamps and the drum was ready for use.

Then, in order to make things lively, he pushed a cork into a flute that was on the work-bench.

"Ten bellers power wouldn't git a squeak out'n that blow pipe," said Jim.

"That air Cremoner cost a hundred dollars, eh?" Jim took it out of the case. "Why, it's a regular give away."

Then Jim examined the rest of the high-priced old violins, and got so thoroughly confused about them that when he put them back in their cases they were pretty well mixed.

Finding a piece of soap on a shelf, he soaped the strings of the thousand-dollar violin, and stuffed a wet cloth into the Paganini.

"Guess I'll know 'em, if nobody else does."

By-and-by the old man came in, and right after him, came a big, stout, puffy-faced Dutchman.

"Ha," said the old man, "all I've got to do, is put the head on. Ah—hello—the head is on, I put it on and forgot I'd done it—so busy you know—it's all ready, Pretzel."

"Yah, yah, das ish goot. How mooch?"

"Fifty cents. Cheap?"

"Yah, das ish sheap."

"Skin," added Jim, grinning.

"Try it," said the old man, taking off his coat.

"Yah; I beat you mit de roll-call."

"He'll find it a beat," thought Jim.

The Dutchman put the belt over his fat shoulder, seized the sticks, and struck an attitude.

"Fine player," said the old man to Jim, then to Pretzel he added:

"Pretzel, give us the devil's tattoo."

"He'll think the devil's in it," put in Jim.

Pretzel raised the sticks, and they had scarcely struck the drum than he and the cat inside set up an opposition yell.

"Meow-row-fitz-scratch, wow-er-row-fitz-row-oo-row-fitz."

"Dunder und Gott in himmel! whas ish dash mit te dam troom?"

The drum danced and bounced on his fat paunch as if it had a touch of St. Vitus.

"What's the matter, Pretzel?" cried the old man.

"Eh! where's that cat?"

"Scratch—fitz—me-ow—row-ow-ow!" squealed the cat.

"Ter tyfel!" roared the Dutchman. "Dake mit das tam troom off;" and he frantically tugged at the straps, his face getting redder and redder, and his eyes sticking out like the revenue stamps on a beer barrel.

"Jim, help him off with the drum," cried the old man, nervously.

Jim made great pretence of helping, and presently he did get it off the frightened Pretzel, and purposely let it drop on its side.

Then the cat inside set up the most dismal, unearthly squalling, and the drum began rolling toward the appalled Pretzel.

"Der tyfel!" he yelled, in his turn, and bolted for the door, and reached it just as a thin, lantern-jawed man was coming in with a violin-case in one hand, and a trombone in a green bag in the other.

"Ooch!"

"Fleukter tompter!"

The collision sent the thin man whirling against the door-post where he dropped his violin-box, and then recovering, and wild with wrath, he gathered his strength, and grasping his trombone he whanged it over the fat face of the frightened Pretzel.

"Oh—oh! Muster—muster!"

The Dutchman in his rage at having the big end

of a brass trombone battered over his face, grabbed the thin man, and then there was a lively time for the space of two seconds, which ended in Pretzel getting out of wind and he and the thin man tumbling over backwards, Pretzel underneath, falling with a tremendous squelch on the unlucky drum.

Crash went the drum, and an awful squall from the imprisoned cat.

The head of the drum crashed out and out sprang the big maltese.

The old man utterly astounded, had until now stood looking on, and trembling with excitement, he cried out to Jim and ran to pick the two belligerents up from the floor.

He got them up and at that moment another customer came in.

The thin man and Pretzel, puffing and wheezing, drew apart to repair damages.

The customer stepped up to the green counter. The old man bowed and strung up his wrinkles to a smiling pitch.

"I understand you have on hand a fine Straduarius?"

"Another looney," said Jim.

"Yes, sir," said the old man, "are you a connoisseur?"

"That's another crazy name for a fiddler, I 'spose," thought Jim.

The customer bowed.

"It's the finest ever brought to this country," said the old man, pulling the case towards him and opening it, he lifted out the violin.

"Yes, that's a genuine," said the customer, glancing at it.

"It's in excellent tune," said the old man. "I was playing on it this morning."

The stranger took up the bow and placing the violin under his chin, ran the bow over the strings.

Ru-u-u-oop!

Then he tried it over again and the same dead scrape came out and nothing more.

The customer looked at the old man, and the old man glared at him.

"Why, there's nothing in it—it's out of order!"

"Eh—what—my—my—Straduarius, nothing in it?"

The old man clutched at the violin so quickly, and was so furiously nervous that the instrument slipped from his fingers to the floor, and when he picked it up the fall had split open the back.

"Ruined—ruined!" cried the old man, gazing at it with an expression of despair on his face that made Jim laugh till his sides ached.

"Straduarius, eh?" said the customer. "It's my opinion you don't know one fiddle from another."

"What?" yelled the old man, "what?"

"Why, that's only a ten dollar instrument, at the best."

Then the old man examined it, and uttered a howl.

"It's all wet—the—the—it's my Paganini!" and he dropped into a chair the picture of despairing grief.

Just then in came another customer.

"Where's my flute—got it done?"

"Yes," said the old man, moving off behind the counter like a funeral procession. "Yes—there it is—one dollar—keys all fixed."

The customer took it up, put it to his mouth, and his fingers on the holes.

He blew till his face was blue.

himself doubled up in the drum, with his knees bent within an inch or two of his nose.  
The Dutchman got hold of the old man, and Jim and the violin customer did the same by the flutist, and in a few minutes they were all standing broken-winded and looking like images of misery.

"This is nice—this is."

"Yah—yah," said the Dutchman, picking up the pieces of his mashed drum; "dosh ish nice—py tam—I make sometings mit de law and de Shustis Coort fun dis!"

"He'll pay for my flute, or I'll bust his head," said the flutist.

"You don't know a Straduarius from a straw bed—you don't!" put in the violin customer.

"Gentlemen, this is some outrageous trick."

"Yah—bootin der cat in mine trum. Yah—yah; dosh ish a drick you will bay for."

"I didn't put a cat in your drum!"

"Who boots der cat in dere den—eh?"

"The same old idiot that put a cork into my flute, and thought I'd take it away without trying it."

"I tell you," roared the old man, dancing about,

"I hadn't the least idea—"

"No; nor you never had," said the flutist.

"Oh, Lord—oh, Lord! Git out of here, all of you. It's a conspiracy!" shrieked the old man.

"A put-up job," chimed in Jim.

At length, after bandying their opinions back and forth, of the old man's mental condition, they went away, and the old man sat down in his queer old shop to rest himself.

"Jim."

"Yes, sir."

"Was anybody in here while I was out, fooling over that drum, or that flute, or the violins?"

"Nossir."

"It's mighty strange."

At that moment he caught Jim trying to choke down his laughter.

Jim gulped it down, but became red in the face, and the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Oh, it was a bustin' old racket!" he said.

"What's that? Ah! ha! I see now!"

Jim made a dive for the door, roaring.

"You're the infernal, miserable little wretch, eh—you—hay?"

"Hay-stack!" yelled Jim. He got out on the door just in time to dodge the remains of the Dutchman's drum, which the old man had hurled after him.

"Oh, my eye, isn't old Strawdriver wild?"

That was the last the old man saw or heard of it; he sadly went back and gazed upon the pile of drums and crash of violins which were scattered around the shop.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"I'm done," said Tim, "I'm done with the drum business. There's music into it but it aint the sort that pays. Jemeny, ef I'd only a thought I'd a loaded some of them horns with flour—wouldn't that of bin a good?"

Jim halted in front of a Sixth Avenue "intelligence office." In the inside he saw a row of women seated one side and a row of men on the other side of the office.

A boy about his own size, with a nose that looked like a rot-wart on a rustycoat apple and a mouth that ticked only an inch or two of dividing his head into two parts, was sweeping off the pavement, with a broom which, like his shoes, was four sizes too large for him.

Jim struck up an acquaintance at once.

"Wat's all them fellers a sittin' in a row in there for—eh?" said Jim.

The boy stopped his work, first taking care to send a sweeping of dirt against a passer's legs, which made him "cuss" all the boys that ever existed.

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried the boy, "didn't he rare mad enough to kick himself?"

"Wat are them fellers in there fer?" repeated Jim.

"Siteations."

"Wat?"

"Siteations."

"And what is them women a sittin' on the other side fer?"

"Siteations?"

Jim took another look at them. Then he said, "wy thunder don't they git married and be done with it?"

"That isn't a marryin' shop," said the boy, balancing the broom handle on the end of his rot wart nose, keeping his mouth open so wide that Jim stepped back.

"Don't let that air broom handle slip off 'on yer nose into your mouth, ef you do it'll go plum through you."

Down came the broom, losing its balance in the air on the back of a lean woman in a paisley shawl, who was about entering the office.

"Out of that, ye dhrifty blaggards, consultin' pore ymales that seen better days than iver sich ugly rats as yere iver dramed of!"

"Seen 'em on the island ten days at a lick," grinned the boy.

"Is she a lookin' fur a situation?" asked Jim.

You bet—and she's bin a settin' in the office fur last two months."

"How long'll it take her to hatch out one a settin' it?"

"Till the boss fires her out. He fired out two old etters last week."

"Wot does the boss pay you?"

"Two dollars a week an' ne hallerdays 'ceptin' Sunday. Lordy, how I'd like to have a bustin' ole after-on all to myself—jest onct."

"An' git."

"Not much. Git bounced if I did, sure pop." Just then a man's voice was heard from the office. "Here Bill!"

"That's me," said the boy.

"Bill!"

"All right—coming."

"Hurry up that sweeping and come in—d'y'e hear?"

"Yes, I'm here." The boy worked the broom for a minute or two lively, managing to throw behind him as much dirt as he swept before him.

Then he suddenly paused, and his face lighted up with a broad grin.

"I say, you feller," he said to Jim, "workin' fur anybody?"

"Yes; fur myself."

"Got no place?"

"What air you a givin' me?" said Jim.

"Wy, see here," said the boy, giving his wart nose a wipe with the back of his hand, "I've got a dodge."

"Does it make you sick?"

"I've got it," repeated the boy.

"Better take suthin' fur it."

"See here, you come in here with me an' I'll tell the boss you're my cousin, an' that you've come to tell me that my old grandmother is a dyin', an' that they've sent you fur me to come home."

"Well, wot of it?" asked Jim.

"Wy, I'll git the boss to let you stay into my place till to-morrow mornin'. See it?"

"Wat'll I have to do?" asked Jim.

"Oh, sweep out, run of errands, tend ladies' carriages when they drives up after servants, an' that's all."

"I'm yer huckleberry," said Jim.

"Come right in here," bawled the voice from the office.

"Forrerd, march!" said the boy, shouldering his broom. "I'm coming, sir."

In went the boy, with Jim at his heels.

Inside of a railing, at an old desk, sat the owner of the voice. On the desk in front of him were two or three big black books.

He was smoking a cigar and turning over the leaves of a book, making a great show of being terribly busy.

The row of women servants of all sorts and shades, seated on a long bench, and the row of men servants, opposite, were sitting in solemn silence staring at each other, at the "boss," or at nothing, by turns.

"Put that broom away," said the boss.

"Please, sir," said the boy, jerking his thumb toward Jim, "this is my cousin," and then he went on and told his ghost story about his old grandmother, in a blubbering tone, that made Jim grin from ear to ear.

"Can your cousin do the work?"

"Oh, yes, sir—he's worked at it before."

"Wot a liar!" said Jim to himself; "he beats me all holler."

The boss of the office looked at Jim and at the boy.

"You'll be here to-morrow morning?"

"Sure, boss."

"Well, you can go. What's your name?"—this was addressed to Jim.

"Jim Jams!"

The boss laughed.

"Nice name, that, for a temperance boy. Where does your father live?"

"Nowhere," answered Jim.

"Dead, I suppose."

"Ef he ain't, old Jed lied like thunder."

"Well, you come inside the railing and sit down here. Bill, you start."

Bill grabbed his hat and was out of the office and around the corner kicking up his heels inside of two minutes.

Jim sat down on a rickety chair behind the railing at the end of the desk.

"I don't see a chance for a racket here," he thought.

"Can you write?" said the boss.

"Yes, sir."

"Now then, I'm going across the way to see a man."

"Beer fur two," added Jim, mentally. "He'll see a dozen afore he gits back."

"And if any servants come in to have their names put down they'll pay you fifty cents, and if anybody comes for a servant—well, send for me—over the way. Dy'e understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Treat 'em all politely—treat 'em well."

"Yes, sir."

The boss put on his hat, lifted the desk lid and took a couple of cigars out of a box two thirds full; then lighted one and went out.

Jim took the boss's seat, and spread himself out as if he owned the whole shop.

"He said treat 'em well. Derned if I don't begin with the cigars."

He took the box out of the desk and went out with it along the row of men sitting on the bench.

"Boss said I was to treat you fellers—take a cigar," said Jim, grinning.

Every one of them took a cigar, and in a few minutes every one of them was puffing away.

"The boss is a foine mon."

"Divil a happorth o' a pipe for me."

"Cawnt you guv us a light, you know!"

There were twenty-three of them smoking. Before the cigars were half smoked up the room was stifling full of smoke. Jim found in the desk a lot of apples and half a dozen oranges. These he handed around to the female servants, and they set their jaws working like sawmills. Then Jim thought he might make things more lively by shutting the front doors.

He was about it when a carriage drove up to the door, the driver being in livery. Jim ran out and opened the carriage door. A lady dressed in the top of fashion stepped daintily out.

"Is Mr. Bevans in?"

"No, mum, but I can find him, mum."

"I want to get a young woman as a waitress. He promised to have one for me to-day."

"Come in, mum," said Jim. "There's a whole leg in, wots bin awatin' here every day fur a month."

The lady, gathering up her silk train, followed Jim. He opened the door, and she was no sooner in than she uttered a little scream.

The smoke was so thick that through it the servants on the benches looked like a lot of hams hanging against the wall.

"Goodness, what's this? I'm—it is fearful."

"This is their smoking day, mum."

"Oh, oh, let me out!" cried the lady, "I—I shall faint."

"Git a chair there," said Jim, "for the lady, she wants a waiter."

One of the servants plunged through the smoke, and brought out a chair from behind the railing, and into that chair, half suffocated, the lady dropped.

The women, old and young, gathered around her, all talking at once. Jim said to one of them, "your're the gal she came for."

"How dy're know?"

"Cos she told me so. Git out and git into the ker-ridge," and Jim taking her by the arm, led her out. She was a great, broad shouldered Irish girl.

"Say, you feller in buttons," said Jim to the liveried driver, "your missus says drive this gal home, and then come back here, and be quick about it." Jim fired the big girl into the carriage. The driver looked doubtful for a moment, and then away he dashed up the street.

Jim went back into the office. The women were gabbling and talking at the fainting lady.

"Oh—take me out of here—oh—oh!"

"Shall I fetch the boss, ma'am?" cried Jim.

"Send my driver in to me."

"He's gone, mum!"

"Oh-o-o—what—gone!"

"Yes, mum; driv off with a waiter women who picked herself out for you, mum."

The lady got up on her feet. "Let me get out—this is a den—I—oh—why did I—"

"Wait one minnit more—I'll fetch the boss."

Jim ran across the street to the beer saloon, where he found the boss deep in a game of dominoes, and pulling away at his beer mug.

"Boss—boss!" cried Jim.

The boss started up. "What's the matter with you?"

"There's a big row over in the office—fine lady—all

"Go it, old gals," cried Jim, "here comes a couple of cops. He'll club you loose."

The two policemen came up.

"What's the row?"

"Lot of fellers inside a fightin' and these here two soap bilers a tryin' to git out."

The policemen ran up and each one of them grabbed a woman by the arm. Then bracing back they began pulling.

"Once!" bawled Jim. "Twice—three times!"

The third yank at the fat woman's arms moved them—unwedged them from the doorway so suddenly that one of the policemen went over backwards, and on top of him came with a yell and a heavy squeal the Irish woman.

The officer rolled her off much as he would a barrel of beer or a bag of beans, and bouncing to his feet, full of wrath, flourished his club, and shouting to his comrade:

"Come on, Jake, let's clean out this crib."

In they bolted, and the hot coals having set fire to the old carpet behind where the railing had been, the smell of the burning cotton and the smoke was enough to choke them.

The boss, the men, and the women were shouting and crying, and were mixed up together like fishworms in a basket.

The two officers flourished their clubs, and by dint of punching, collarin', jerkin', and shoutin', finally succeeded in getting half a dozen of the crowd out upon the sidewalk.

One of them had the boss. The boss when he came out, looked like a professional tramp in hard luck. His coat was ripped up the back, his face smeared with soot and blood from his nose, and his shirt collar was flying out behind limp and ragged as a flag of distress in a calm.

"Oh, Lord—oh, Lord!" he groaned, as he leaned up against the side of the house.

"Git some water," said the policeman, "and put out that fire on the carpet."

"Reglar Donnybrook fair," said the other policeman.

Then the crowd, having got out of the office, began making all sorts of wild explanations. One said the boss "fired off a pistol at us fellers."

Another said he threw the desk at the party.

And they all agreed, women and men, with one voice, that the boss came in drunker than a boiled owl, and that the first thing he did was to knock down a "born lady."

"An', Misther Polacemin, we'll lave it to that bi' there," said the footman, pointing at Tim, "fur whin the boss went out, he was as sober as a supreme court judge, an' towld the bi' to trate us to the cigars, sur, an' the faymales to the apples and oranges—he ded, sur."

Jim, when he heard this, put at least ten feet of sidewalk between himself and the boss.

The boss, when this revelation came, gave one glance at Jim, and then he took in the whole situation.

"You young scoundrel!" he yelled, and before the policeman divined his intention, he "went" for Jim.

But Jim was too quick for him. Away he ran up the street, and the boss after him helter-skelter.

"Stop 'im! stop 'im!" yelled the boss.

"Stop thief! stop thief!" cried a lot of street boys, who joined in the wild chase.

Jim knew he had the best of them as to speed, so he skipped on, gaining on the crowd. Around corners, across the street, doubling on them behind carts and wagons and horse cars, the crowd behind constantly increasing and howling in their desire to run him down. Jim still kept on.

Finally he came into one of the side streets leading toward the river, and he began to think, as he puffed and blowed, that that sort of fun wasn't paying.

Just ahead of him was a blockade of carts and wagons caused by a horse-car being off the track.

"Here's a chance," thought Jim, "to give 'em a doubler." He dived into the street under the horses' legs, out to the opposite side, got into the space closed on by the jam, and seeing a one-horse, covered farmer's wagon, he climbed into the back end on to a pile of cabbages and potatoes, and crawled into a space between a couple of barrels.

As he did so the jam of wagons was broken up, and the wagon he was in began moving slowly on.

Jim peeped out through a rip in the cloth curtain at the side. Tired as he was he couldn't help grinning. For he saw the boss puffing and blowing, with his sooty face and torn coat, rushing about, followed by the crowd, and assisted by a policeman.

"That was a doubler onto them," said Jim. "That feller'll have to open another intelligence shop before he'll know enough to ketch me. Won't he slather that ore cousin of mine to-morrer morning? Oh, no—may-be not."

The wagon rumbled and jolted on into Greenwich street, down toward Washington Market.

"Guess I'm safe. I guess I'll crawl out and see who the feller is that's a drivin' this vegitable coach."

He crept out from between the barrels into the potatoes at the front.

The driver, hearing the noise, looked around.

"Hello," said Jim, getting up to a sitting posture.

"Hello, yerself," cried the driver, twisting his lanky body around so as to get a full view of his strange and unexpected load.

They both looked each other full in the face. The driver dropped his lines and whip and gave vent to a prolonged "w-h-e-w!"

"Why, Uncle Jed!"

"Jim, by Jerusalem!"

It was old Jed, sure enough.

"Whoa!" cried the old man to his horse.

"Whoa, January!" shouted Jim, scrambling over to the seat beside the old man.

"Goodness gracious, Jim, wherever on the wide earth

did you come from, and how'd you git into the wagon?"

Jim wasn't going to tell the old man of his little racket with the intelligence-office boss.

So he cooked up a little yarn in his mental kitchen, over the fire of his imagination—a sort of Munchausen omelette to tickle the old man's appetite for information.

"Why, Uncle Jed, you know where that jam of wagons was?"

"Certain—yes."

"Well, I was a-tryin' to git across the street and then I happened to look up and I seen you a-settin' on this seat as natural as could be."

"You don't say! wall, now, its curus I didn't see you."

"Then I climbed up into the hind end of the wagon, over the tail-board, thinkin' I'd give you a surprise party all by myself, uncle."

"Well, there now," said the old man, gathering up the lines, and striking his old horse on his bony back with the whip, "I'd never hev thunk it, never."

He drove on half a block in silence.

Then he pulled the old rattlebones of a horse up into a shambling walk, and looked mildly for a moment at Jim.

"What've you bin a doin' of?" he asked.

"Jobbin," said Jim—"Jobbin in one place an' another."

"What're you a doin' on now, eh?"

"Jest got out of a place to-day," answered Jim.

"Good wages?"

"Didn't git anythin' at the last place."

"Sakes' alive! working for nothin'. Your duds is lookin' awful shabby, Jim."

"Yes, they air kinder worn."

"I say, Jim," said the old man, coaxingly, "how'd you like to come down to the farm?"

"Wot, to live?"

"Wall, yaas; certin I don't want you to come down there to die." And the old man laughed at his little attempt at a joke.

"I dunno," said Jim, "but I would jest as lief try it awhile."

"The old 'ooman's kinder been a hankerin' after havin' you come down, an' I've tried to hunt you up; but gracious, there's a gettin' to be so many people into the city that I don't know nothin' 'bout anybody, that I sorter giv it up."

The old man thought a minute, then he went on.

"But no more tricks, Jim."

"No."

"You're a gettin' too big fur such outlandish pranks as blowin' up turkies, and a settin' the neighbor's bull crazy with a red hoss blanket."

Jim grinned, but said nothing.

"The old parson, he's dead, and the bull's dead, and that air red blanket was carried off by the tramps, but the old woman still hangs on."

"Well, uncle, I'll go down with you."

"That's right, Jim."

"You'll let me go to school?"

"Ye—yaas, ef you do up the chores mornin' and evenin' and help in the field. The crops hev' come up big since you was away, Jim, an' butter's riz."

So, the old man doing most of the talking, they jolted on.

After getting through with his trading at the market, Uncle Jed drove to the ferry, and by nightfall the old horse came to a halt with them at the barn-yard bars of the old homestead.

"Old 'ooman," cried the old man.

The old lady came out on the porch.

"Who on yeath's that you've lugged home? Another boy, I s'pose, to 'dopt and hev' run away."

"Old 'ooman, it's Jim."

"J—i—m!" she echoed.

Then she came flying as fast as her old limbs would let her to the bars.

"Jim!"

"Yes'um," said Jim.

She ran up and threw her arms around him. "Why, what a great big boy you've growed to be."

"Pshaw! old 'ooman, don't make a fool of yourself," said Jed, "he haint bin gone so long—it's only nigh onto four months—it'll be four months in apple-sass time."

"Well, he's grow'd, anyhow."

Then directly they went into the house. The old woman set a good supper, and then Jim opened his heart, and with a feeling he never had before of rest and gratitude, he went up-stairs to his old bed in the garret.

And Jim Jams is there. But the old man is gone. Early in the next summer he was quietly laid to rest.

"This is wot he said fur his last words," said Jim solemnly, to the undertaker. "Jim, do you take keer of the old 'ooman, an' plant me where the sile is dry."

And Jim saw that it was done.

[THE END.]

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